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BY TIM DICKINSON

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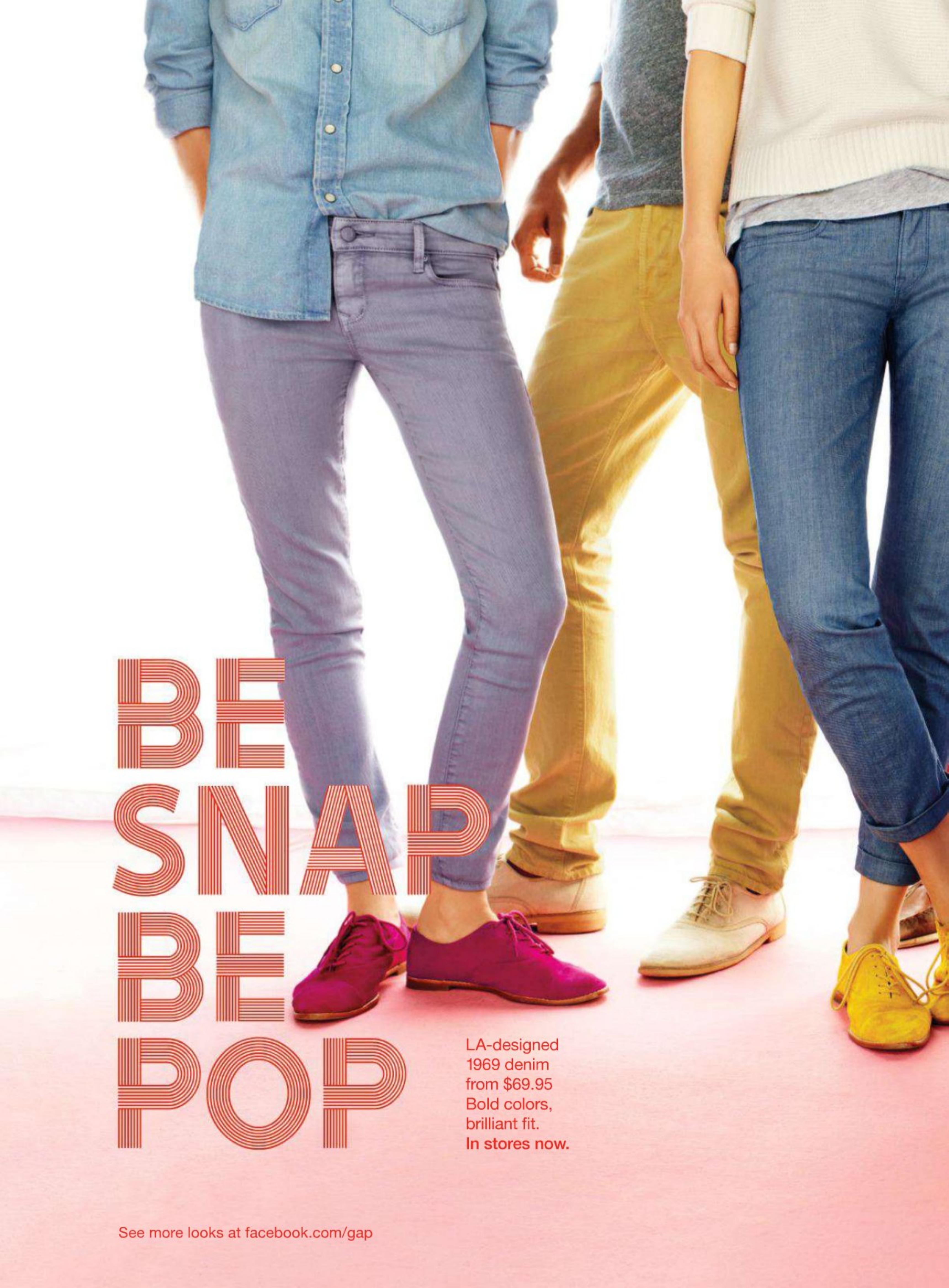
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RS1151

"ALL THE NEWS THAT FITS"

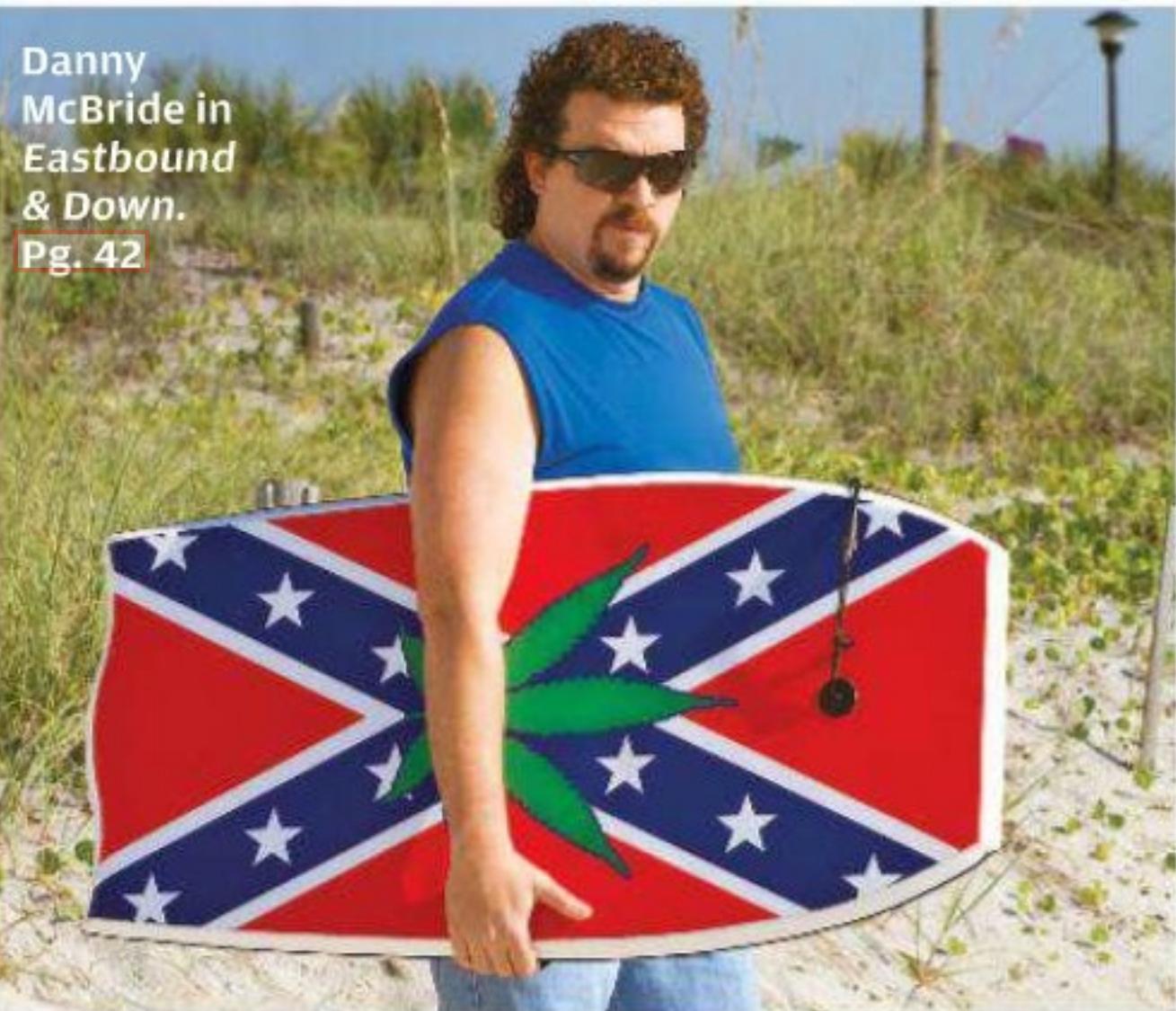


Finish What Ya Started

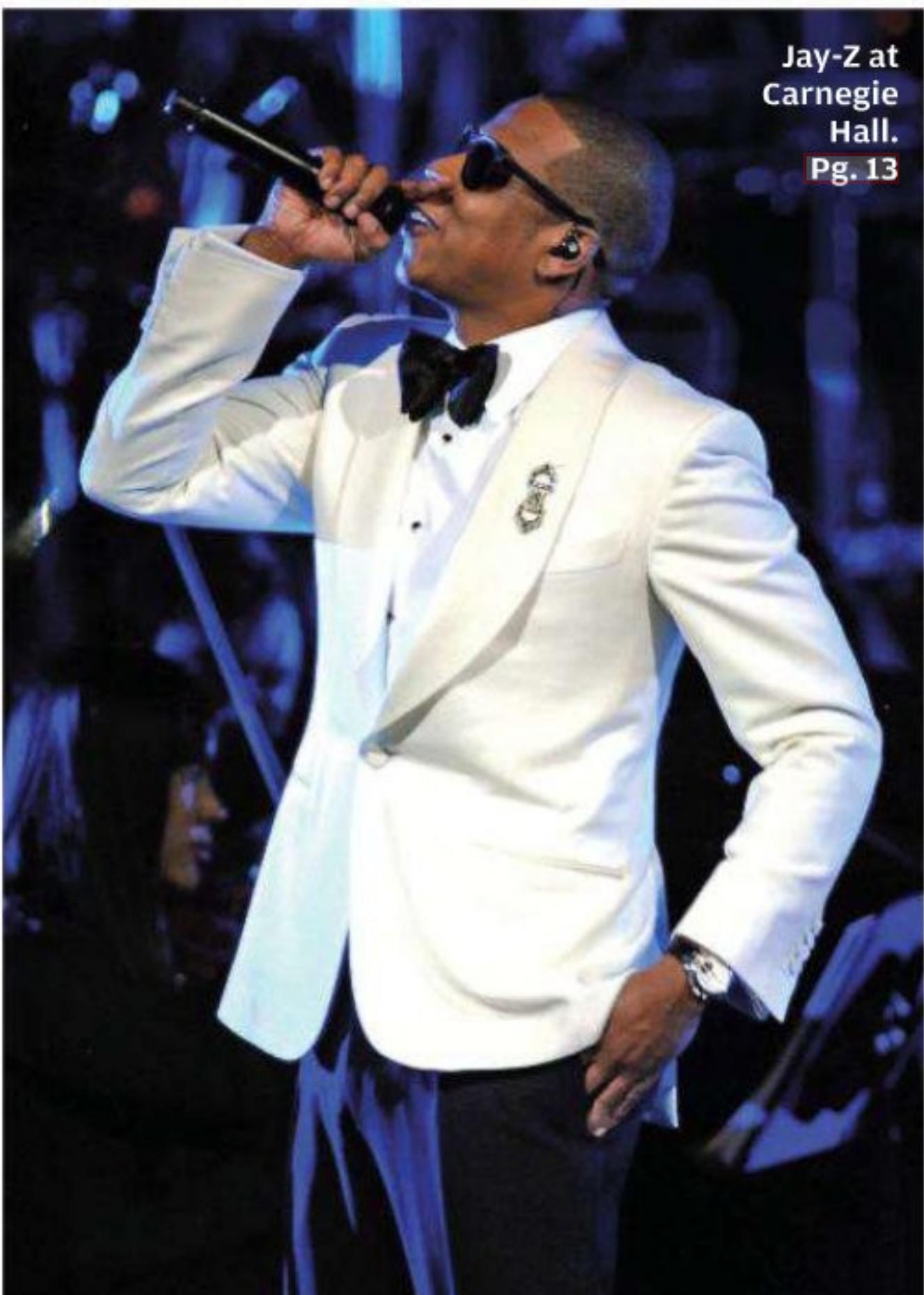
"Welcome to our island – abandon all hope," said David Lee Roth on the eve of Van Halen's 49-date arena run. At an L.A. preview show, the band played classics like "Panama," plus songs from its comeback album, *A Different Kind of Truth*, to a star-studded crowd (Tom Morello, Charlie Sheen). "It made me really glad those guys are together, alive and rocking hard again," says Morello.

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Grooming by Oliver Woods at One Makeup.



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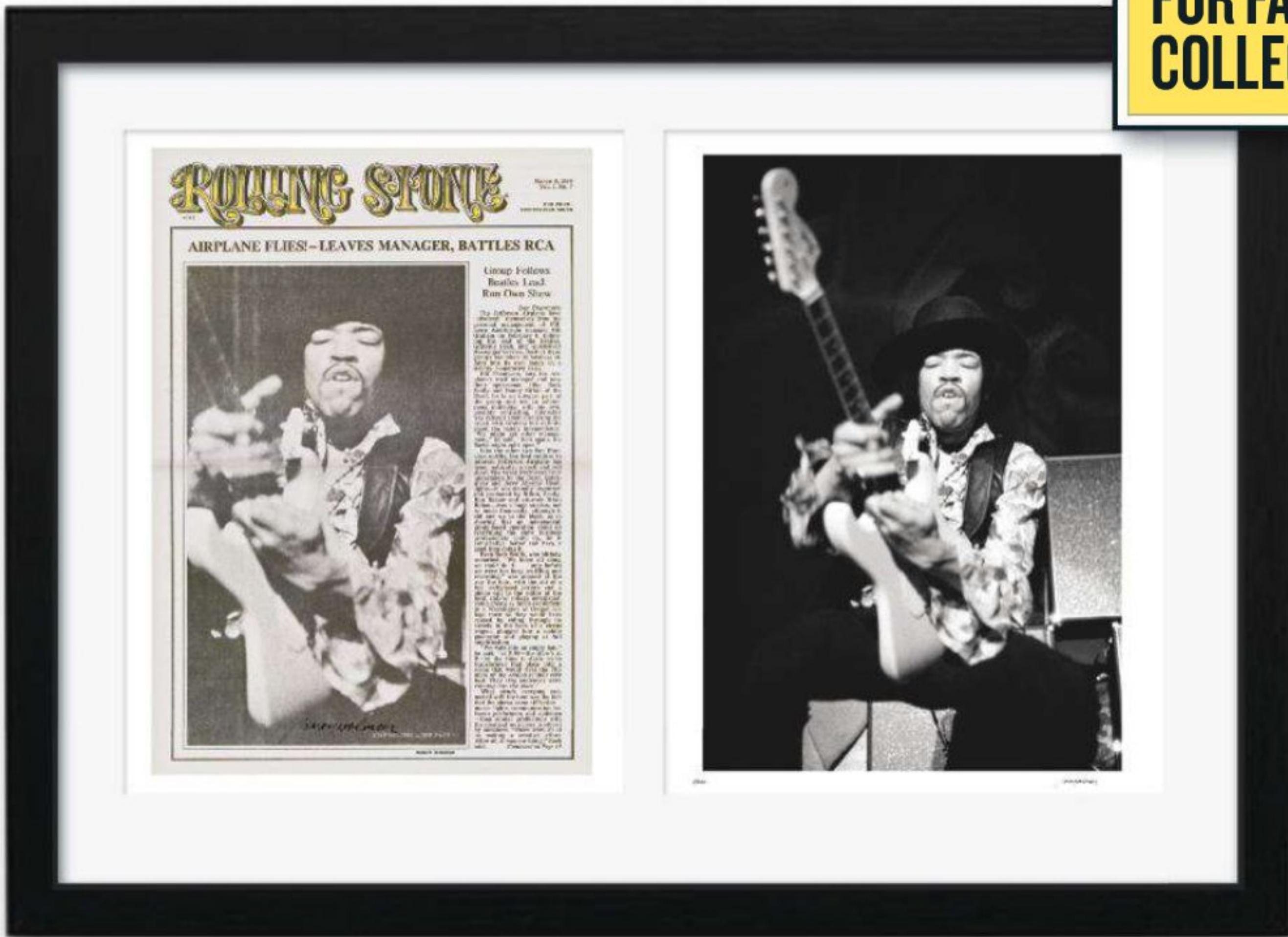
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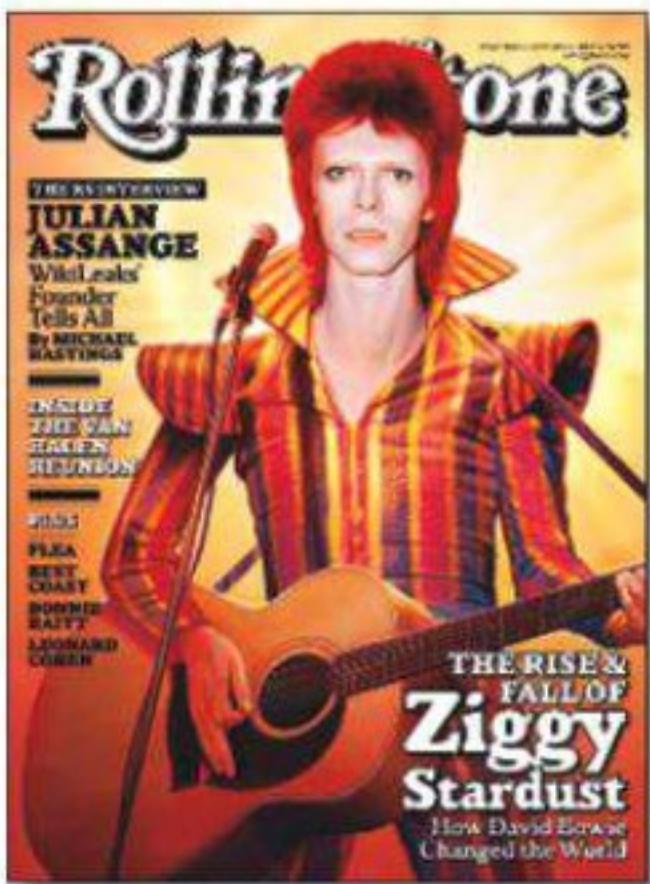
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{ Love Letters & Advice }



Space Oddity

I WAS ABSOLUTELY ENTHRALLED by Mikal Gilmore's cover story about David Bowie ["How Ziggy Stardust Fell to Earth," RS 1149]. I thought I knew a lot about Bowie, but I had merely scratched the surface. Gilmore's extensive backstory of Bowie's childhood and relationship with various collaborators was fascinating. Only ROLLING STONE would have the balls to put an artist on the cover who isn't on the charts today but still remains relevant to his legion of fans.

Ken Corsini, Leawood, KS

GILMORE'S ARTICLE ENTICED me to do something I haven't done in years: listen to old Bowie! Nice!

Michael Epstein, via the Internet

I CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF TIM O'Brien's cover illustration of David Bowie. I'll use Bowie's

own words (which he used to describe "Tutti Frutti") to describe O'Brien's cover: It "filled the room with energy and color and outrageous defiance."

Mark Nelson
Rancho Santa Fe, CA

I'VE ALWAYS LOVED BOWIE'S music, but now that I know he has a "long, weighty penis, like the pendulum of a grandfather clock," I love him even more!

Chad McCaskill, Los Angeles

IS IT REALLY FAIR TO BOWIE or your readers to print an article full of old information? I rely on RS writers to have access I don't have. A blurb on what Bowie is doing now didn't cut it. You can do better.

Carla Scuzzo, St. Louis

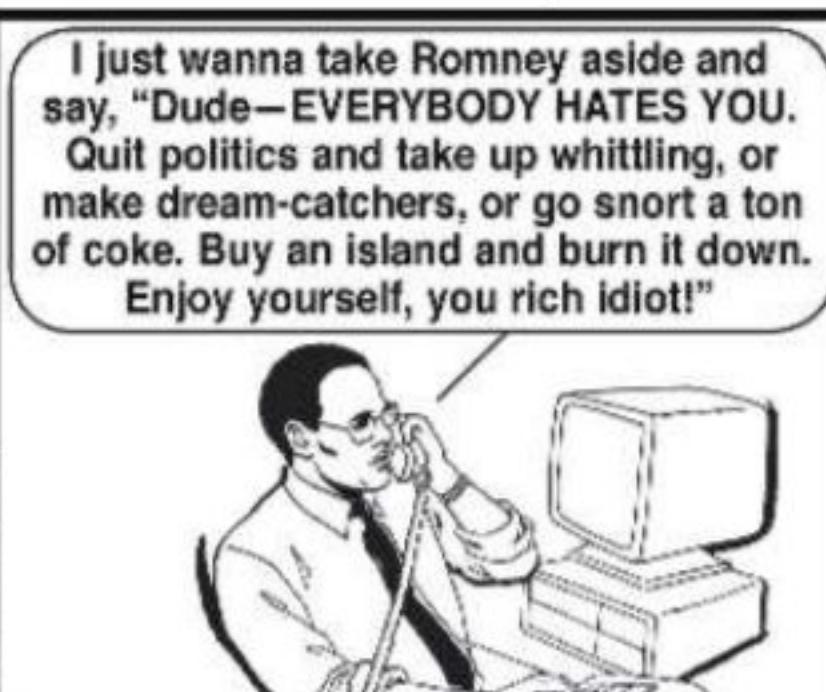
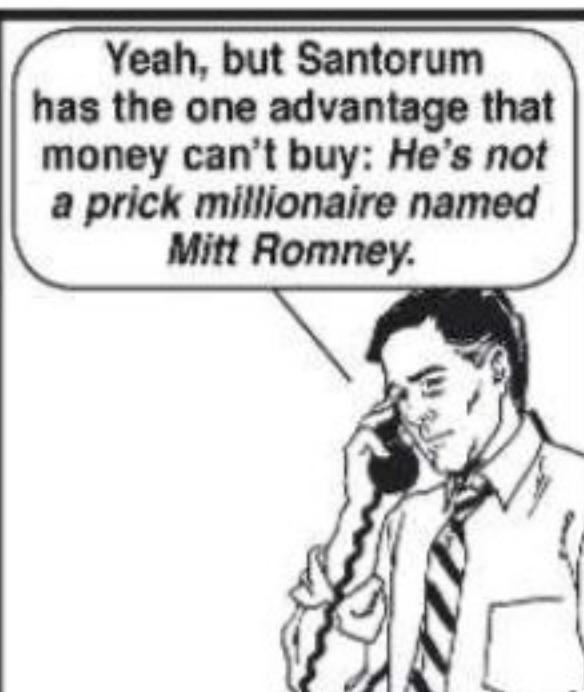
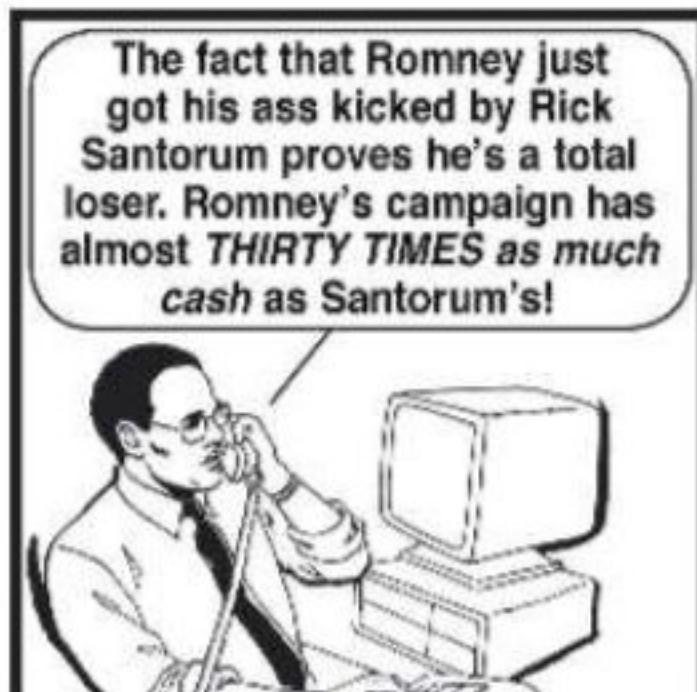
BEST COVER IN A LONG TIME. Born in the Eighties, I'm a few generations away from really understanding the impact of Ziggy. Thanks for the enlightenment. Bowie was a game-changer. He gave the disenfranchised a voice and the ability to be accepted somewhere in society. I never realized that his influence can be found in every genre of music and art ever since.

Eric Moore, Washington, D.C.

THE BOWIE ARTICLE WAS truly superb. I felt like I could hear the Thin White Duke himself speaking through Gilmore's prose.

Scott L. Hilchey, Los Angeles

Get Your Vote On



By David Rees

one of the only places reporting anything is ROLLING STONE.

Michael Forrest
Huntington Beach, CA

Occupy Oakland

SCOTT OLSEN ["CASUALTY OF the Occupation," RS 1149] is a true American hero. He served his country, and then later stood up for the 99 percent of us who have been screwed by some sleazebags in the one percent.

Rick Hedberg, via the Internet

YOUR CHOICE OF HEROES never ceases to amaze me. Scott Olsen is a drain to society and a disgrace to those in the Marine Corps.

Mark Gooding, via the Internet

BEING A FORMER MARINE myself, I want to inform your writers that there is no such thing as an ex-Marine.

Salvatore DeBellis, Margate, FL

Dead Business

JERRY, PIGPEN, BRENT, Keith and Vince must be rolling in their graves! The Grateful Dead clamoring for more

"Only RS would have the balls to put an artist on the cover who isn't on the charts today but still remains relevant."

cle I've ever read in these pages. What a great closing statement!

Chris Jordan, Milford, OH

ANOTHER UNBEGGING-
LIEVABLY good issue. The Assange interview was grip-your-balls horrifying. Things are getting weird in America. A free press is now almost a myth, and the great American experiment hangs by a thread. But

money ["Business Booming for the Dead," RS 1149]? Hart says, "Pennies here and there, and it all pays the rent." The fact is, they are all rich. I have been a Deadhead since the Seventies, but I will not put one more penny into your greedy pockets.

David Mollenkamp
Via the Internet

AS THE DEAD EXPAND THEIR marketing of the band's logos and history, they should keep one thing in mind: WWJD?

Matt Kenna, Durango, CO

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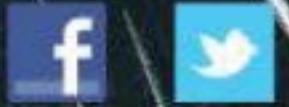
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Rock & Roll



RAP'S SINATRA Jay-Z performed with a full orchestra in New York.

Jay-Z Storms Carnegie Hall at Charity Shows

Alicia Keys, Nas join the rap king at historic venue
By Simon Vozick-Levinson

ICAN'T BELIEVE WE'RE in this building tonight," Jay-Z said with a huge grin on February 7th, midway through the second of his two charity shows at New York's Carnegie Hall. "I just want to take it in for a second."

The benefits, which raised \$3.5 million for United Way of

New York City and the Shawn Carter Scholarship Foundation, were just the latest victory lap for rap's reigning champion. Assisted by a 36-piece orchestra and a band led by the Roots' Questlove on drums, Jay-Z ran through the best of his vast catalog – from 1998's "Hard Knock Life" to 2001's "Heart of the City" to the brand-new "Glory," his sweet tribute to daughter Blue Ivy Carter – with unbeatable, Sinatra-level charisma.

The star-studded crowd went wild both nights when special guest Alicia Keys showed up to belt out their 2009 smash, "Empire State of Mind." The singer stuck around for a killer midshow set by Jay's former archrival Nas. "It was an epic New York moment," says Keys. Adds Nas, "Walking out there in a tux was unreal. Two dudes from the projects up on that stage – it felt historic."

Is the CD Era Finally Over?

Labels take tough look at format as sales, profits continue to fall
By Steve Knopper

OVER THE HOLIDAYS, Robb Nansel and his girlfriend decided to buy her stepfather a John Prine CD while visiting in Leesburg, Virginia. But the town has no major record store, Borders closed a long time ago, and Best Buy and Target stock just a few thousand CDs, mostly hits. "It's really sad," Nansel says. "You've got to order from Amazon, or you've got to live in a city that has a record store."

Nansel, owner of indie label Saddle Creek, home to Bright Eyes and Cursive, understands the problem. The record industry sold 223 million CDs last year, according to Nielsen SoundScan, but that adds up to less than 50 percent of sales – down from roughly 68 percent in 2008. More than a decade after Napster upended the record business, demand for CDs is so low that over the past year labels have negotiated drastic bargains with the big-box chains – just \$4.99 for hundreds of catalog titles, from Madonna's *Like a Prayer* to Etta James' *At Last!* "We have that conversation every time we put out a record: Should we put out a CD, or not?" says Nansel. "We always end up doing them. But the profit margin is less on [Cont. on 14]

Blonde on Blonde: Madonna, Gaga Face Off

Inside the megatours just announced by pop's biggest superstars

GEAT READY FOR SOME serious blond ambition: Madonna and Lady Gaga, both known for spectacularly profitable arena spectacles, will each be hitting the road this year with what are bound to be two of pop's biggest-ever tours.

Shortly after her hyperkinetic Super Bowl extravaganza, Madonna unveiled dates for her 2012 tour, which kicks off in Israel in May before arriving here in August and running through November. "We're getting flooded with calls," says Dave Brown of Dallas' American Airlines Center, where the tour stops in October. "The Super Bowl was such an incredible performance that it got people very excited." The tour includes Madonna's first-ever date at Yankee Stadium, which seats 45,000 for concerts.

Gaga will be hot on her heels: Her Born This Way Ball launches in Asia in April before, sources say, occupying U.S. arenas early next year. "I can't wait," Gaga tells RS. "It's all I can think about. I've been singing

MADONNA	VS.	LADY GAGA
NUMBER OF SHOWS		
52 (more to come)		110 (per Gaga's Twitter)
ESTIMATED GROSS		
\$500 million		\$250 million
CAREER ALBUM SALES		
52 million		8.5 million
FACEBOOK FANS		
7,538,919		47,729,465

and training my whole life to be a musician. I see a piano and want to sit on it and play it and sing. Nothing else matters."

The tours, both promoted by Live Nation, come with huge financial expectations: Gaga's Monster Ball shows grossed \$188 million, and Madonna's

last outing, the 2008 Sticky & Sweet Tour, raked in \$408 million, making it the third-biggest tour of all time.

Gaga offered a preview of the Born This Way Ball stage set on Twitter – a castle with turrets on each side – and a tour poster with her face filling the sky

above the set. As with the Monster Ball Tour, the shows will have a general-admission Monster Pit in front of the stage.

Less is known about the staging for Madonna's shows. According to a source, at least one element from her Super Bowl blowout – which included Roman centurions, acrobats and the Dancing Dolls team from Southern University in Louisiana – will be incorporated. Madonna, adds the source, may be holding casting sessions in Paris and London for additional elements. "The Super Bowl was a bit of a prototype for what lies ahead," says a source in Madonna's camp.

As a result of Madonna's \$120 million deal with Live Nation in 2007, fans who buy tickets for the U.S. shows online will receive a physical or digital copy of her upcoming album, *MDNA* (which will be released by Interscope in conjunction with Live Nation on March 26th). Gaga may well have a new LP, too, by the time the tour hits the U.S. – at which point *Born This Way* will be 20 months old. "I'll probably put out an album again while I'm on tour," she says. "I'm always writing new music." DAVID BROWNE

END OF THE CD ERA?

[Cont. from 13] a CD because of the cost of manufacturing and everything else."

With streaming services like Spotify rising and iTunes entrenched as the world's biggest music retailer, digital sales in 2011 outstripped physical sales for the first time ever – leaving some major-label executives questioning whether it's even worth continuing to sell CDs. "At some point, it becomes uneconomical to sell a physical disc," says one source. "The volume of physical discs definitely gets substantially reduced." The source predicts that labels will soon make less on the average CD than on a digital album. When that happens, some wonder if it will even be worth selling CDs at all. "Bottom line? I'm going to say three years – Walmart might squeeze five years out of it," he says.

Of course, experts have predicted the death of the CD since the late Nineties. Even after Tower, Virgin and other music chains closed, CDs survived, thanks in part to older music fans still hooked on collecting physical objects. But younger fans show very different preferences. In the first week of February, for instance, Leonard

"Bottom line?" says a label exec. "I'm going to say [CDs have] three years."

Cohen's *Old Ideas* sold roughly 70 percent of its 41,000 copies on CD. Meanwhile, Lana Del Rey's *Born to Die* sold just 26 percent of its 77,000 copies that way, according to *Billboard*. "Anyone still betting their future on the CD aspect of the business is toast," says another

major-label exec. "We're not in the CD business, we're in the music business. If you don't design your company accordingly, you're doomed."

In the near future, of course, the CD isn't going anywhere. Adele's *21* continues to sell at \$10.99 or higher in most stores (hits still command a premium). And labels have realized they can sell deluxe versions, with bonus tracks or a DVD, for substantially more. "There's still a load of freaking people that are buying these things," says Carl Mello, CD-purchasing director for New England music chain Newbury Comics.

In a surprising twist, the discount program has Walmart restoring some CD floor space that the retail giant slashed in recent years. "It's driving a lot of traffic to the stores," says Jim Urie, president of Universal Music Group Distribution. "People are typically buy-

ing several titles once they're in there digging around." Adds John Butcher, Target's vice president of entertainment, the \$5 price will likely lead his stores to expand music floor space as well: "There'll certainly be an end point [to the CD]. We just don't see it at any point in the next few years. It's a format we think is relevant today."

But for the labels, the success of the program is something of a Catch-22. The discount-pricing strategy might have slowed the demise of CDs, but sources say it also pushed profits on CDs down. "A lot of people want to have a hard copy," says Marc Weinstein, co-owner of the California chain Amoeba Music. "They don't see the point of paying \$1 for a song in thin air. But we can't keep the industry going ourselves. We sell a hell of a lot of CDs in our stores, but there needs to be an entire market."

Blackmagicdesign



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Cash Family Kicks Off Blowout Celebration of Country Icon's 80th

Estate preps flood of rare tunes, restores boyhood home

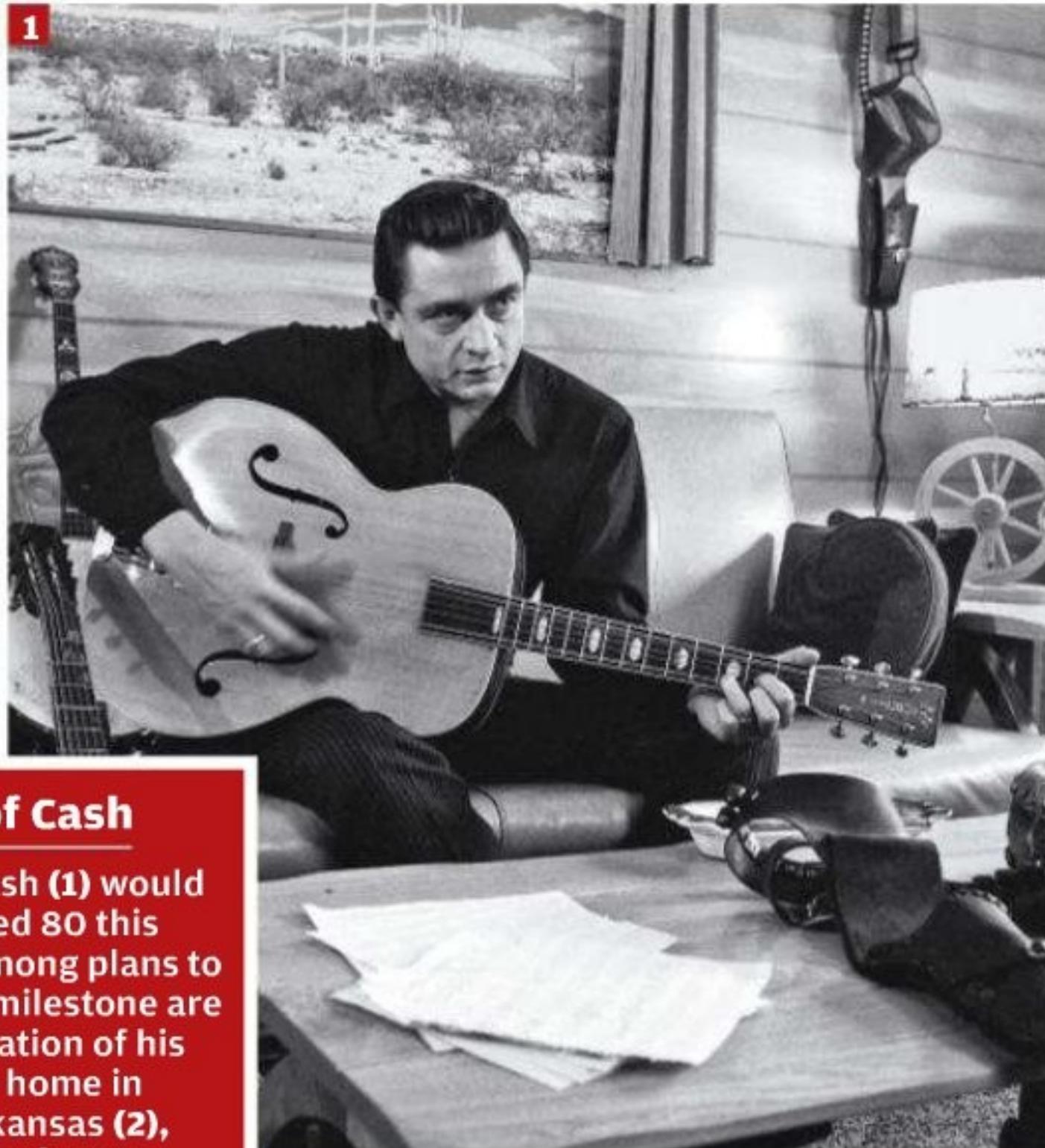
ON FEBRUARY 26TH – what would have been Johnny Cash's 80th birthday – his siblings, children and grandchildren will gather at his boyhood home in Dyess, Arkansas, to celebrate the upcoming restoration of the crumbling 1930s structure. Then they will head to the town's community center to sing and share stories about the late star. "He should've lived to 80," says daughter Rosanne Cash. "It's hard. But it's so uplifting to celebrate it this way, rather than going to a dark place about how sad it is he isn't still around."

The Dyess events will kick off a busy year for the Cash estate. This summer, a separate museum will open in downtown Nashville with the most comprehensive collection of Cash artifacts ever. On April 3rd, two lost gospel albums Cash cut in the Seventies and Eighties will be released as *Bootleg IV: The Soul of Truth*. A few months later, Sony will put out a huge box set of everything Cash released on Sun and Columbia Records in the first three decades of his recording career, along with unreleased music. There might even be enough late-period material left in the vaults for another volume of Rick Rubin's *American Recordings* series, which ended in 2010. Says son John Carter Cash, "I do believe there's enough to warrant a release he would be proud of."

The Nashville museum is being organized by Bill Miller, who befriended Cash in the Seventies. Miller, who owned a historical-documents business, helped fuel Cash's hobby of collecting signed presidential papers, while Cash supplied Miller with priceless country-music history. "There

House of Cash

Johnny Cash (1) would have turned 80 this month. Among plans to mark the milestone are the restoration of his childhood home in Dyess, Arkansas (2), and a slew of never-before-released music.



2

were literally thousands of pieces," Miller says of the collection. "It got to a point where I was scared to leave my house." Up to a thousand items will be on display, including Cash's prized custom Gibson acoustic, a Grammy trophy, gold and platinum records, and hand-

"It's hard," says daughter Rosanne Cash. "He should have lived to 80."

written lyrics to "Folsom Prison Blues" and "I Walk the Line."

The Cash family, meanwhile, is focusing on the Dyess restoration. Arkansas State University, which recently purchased the home, plans to use old photographs and interviews with

Cash's living siblings to restore the home to its original form. The university is also creating a museum nearby that will cover Cash's modest upbringing through his early 1950s Air Force stint, with items like his senior-prom booklet and letters he sent while stationed in Germany to first wife Vivian Liberto, who died in 2005. "My sisters and I went through the last of my mom's belongings and found all this stuff – it was breathtaking," says Rosanne, who will play a benefit in Arkansas with Willie Nelson this fall. "The last time I was at the house, I was thinking about how many times my dad must have walked that road as a little boy. You don't really take in the full poignancy of it until your parents are gone."

PATRICK DOYLE

IN THE NEWS

Bonnaroo, Metallica announce fest lineups

Radiohead, Phish, the Beach Boys, Bon Iver and Red Hot Chili Peppers will headline the 11th annual Bonnaroo Music festival, slated for June 7th-10th in Manchester, Tennessee.

Ulrich

Additional acts on the bill include the Avett Brothers, the Shins, Skrillex, Feist, the Roots and Foster the People. In other news, Metallica are set to curate and headline their first-ever Orion Music + More festival on June 23rd-24th at Bader Field in Atlantic City. The metal giants will perform their classic 1991 LP, the Black Album, in its entirety on one night, and 1984's *Ride the Lightning* on the other.

Metallica have also tapped the Arctic Monkeys, Avenged Sevenfold, Modest Mouse, the Gaslight Anthem, Gary Clark Jr. and Best Coast to join the lineup. "We've had this idea for a couple of years of doing our version of the Phish and Dave Matthews festivals – a Metallica weekend with our own imprint and personalities on it," drummer Lars Ulrich tells ROLLING STONE. "We pick the bands ourselves. If you're going to put a festival together that has the potential to be mentioned in the same breath as Bonnaroo or a Lollapalooza, you've got to do a good job."

Big Man's nephew to join Springsteen tour

Bruce Springsteen has announced that Jake Clemons – the nephew of late E Street Band saxophonist Clarence Clemons – will be taking over some of his uncle's sax duties on the forthcoming Wrecking Ball tour. A seasoned player, Clemons has guested with the E Street Band on numerous occasions and performed with the Swell Season and Nancy Atlas. In 1992, he played the sax alongside his uncle at Bill Clinton's presidential inauguration.

Clemons

Ed Manion, an original member of Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes (and a member of Springsteen's Sessions Band), will also play saxophone on the tour, but it's not yet clear how they'll divide the parts. Springsteen's trek launches on March 18th in Atlanta.

The Who Sell Out: Townshend Gets Millions for Back Catalog

Guitarist says windfall will fuel solo career. Plus: What's next for the Who?

OVER THE PAST 20 years, the Who's music has been used to sell sports cars, allergy medicine and three incarnations of *CSI*. But that was just the beginning. On January 24th, Pete Townshend announced he was selling all of the publishing rights to his vast catalog of songs to the Spirit Music Group – a boutique firm that controls some or all of the rights to songs by acts from the Grateful Dead to Lou Reed – which now plans to place the Who's music even more aggressively in movies, TV and other media. "It's the biggest deal we've made so far," says Spirit president Mark Fried. "We're looking at his entire body of work."

The company, which spent three years crafting the Townshend deal, has a grand vision for his catalog. Of the roughly 400 songs that Townshend has written, a mere seven tracks – hits like 1971's "Won't Get Fooled Again" and 1978's "Who Are You" – currently attract about 96 percent of the Who's TV and film licensing. "It's criminal," says Fried, who hopes to place more obscure cuts like the 1968 B side "Call Me Lightning" soon. Fried also dreams of a new Broadway run for 1992's *Tommy* musical, a theatrical production of the 1973 rock opera *Quadrophenia* on London's West End – or even building a new custom theater space to present the Who's music. "Perhaps the show will be based on *Lifeshouse*," Fried says of Townshend's unfinished 1971 rock opera, "or the totality of the Who repertoire, giving viewers a fully sensory experience."

Publishing rights – which generate royalty payments for the songwriter every time a tune is played, performed or otherwise licensed – are an increasingly important revenue source in the struggling music business. "If you have an evergreen song, you don't have



I'M FREE
Townshend at the 2010 Super Bowl in Miami.

"This will let him take his muse wherever he sees fit," says a Townshend employee.

to do any real work," says industry lawyer Josh Grier, who has worked on similar deals for the B-52s and Fountains of Wayne. "They just keep on making money."

While neither side will disclose what Spirit spent on Townshend's publishing, industry insiders estimate the price was in the tens of millions at least, possibly topping \$100 million. Townshend, who will remain a consultant to Spirit's use of his catalog (but has no formal veto power), plans to use the windfall to fund new work – potentially including his long-gestating rock opera *Floss* – instead of relying on tour revenue. "To some degree, this deal might allow Pete to be freed from this massive brand called the Who," says Carrie Cooke,

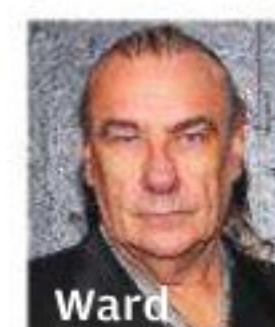
Townshend's director of special projects. "Other projects, like his acoustic 'In the Attic' concert series or his solo albums, were always seen as extracurricular – now he can focus more on them. This deal will let him take his creative muse wherever he sees fit."

But the Who have at least one more big project in the works: A *Quadrophenia* tour is tentatively slated to kick off in November. And on October 8th, Townshend's long-awaited memoir, reportedly titled *Who He?*, will hit shelves. "With all respect to Keith Richards, Pete is writing a very different kind of book," says Fried. "Pete is writing every word himself. He wants to share as much truth as possible, so it's going to be long and intense."

ANDY GREENE

IN THE NEWS

Sabbath reunion to go on without drummer



Black Sabbath are moving ahead with their reunion plans without **Bill Ward**, after the drummer

released an open letter pledging to leave the band "unless a 'signable contract' is drawn up; a contract that reflects some dignity and respect toward me as an original member of the band." In a statement, **Ozzy Osbourne**, **Tony Iommi** and **Geezer Butler** said, "We were saddened to hear via Facebook that Bill declined publicly to participate in our current Black Sabbath plans. We have no choice but to continue recording without him, although our door is always open." Sabbath are cutting their first LP with Osbourne since 1978 in the U.K., where Iommi is undergoing treatment for lymphoma. The group is also slated to kick off a European tour in May.

Lomax archives to stream online for free



Folk archivist **Alan Lomax**'s vast collection of work – including 5,000 hours of field

tapes, among them the first recordings of **Muddy Waters** and **Woody Guthrie**, and 400,000 feet of film – are being released online. About 17,000 tracks will be available for free streaming by the end of February through the Association for Cultural Equity, which Lomax founded in 1983. "My father always felt that part of his job was to give something back to the people whose culture it was," said Anna Lomax Wood, Alan Lomax's daughter. "It's a way of saying, 'What you do is worth something.' And what we do is an extension of that."

Dave Grohl producing sitcom about rock band



Grohl has signed on to executive-produce a new comedy for FX starring comedian

Dana Gould. The show, to be written by Gould, centers around a rising rock band that seeks therapy in order to keep the group from breaking up. No word yet on whether Grohl will appear on the show.

Joey Ramone Rocks Again on New LP

Friends from Joan Jett to Little Steven help finish late Ramone's last blast

AFTER JOEY RAMONE'S death from lymphoma in April 2001, his mother, Charlotte Lesher, and younger brother, Mickey Leigh, were cleaning the Ramones singer's New York apartment when Charlotte picked up an old pizza-delivery receipt. "She was about to throw it away," Leigh recalls. "I turned it over, and there were song lyrics on the back." Right to the end, Leigh says, "Joey was working on something in his head."

On April 21st, a decade after his posthumous solo debut, 2002's *Don't Worry About Me*, Joey will finally deliver a follow-up — called *Ya Know?* after the way Joey used to end every sentence in his Queens drawl. The new album features 17 songs recorded by Joey as demos for and after the Ramones, who broke up in 1992. The tracks — which include the anthem "Rock & Roll Is the Answer," the hometown hymn "New York City" and a striking country-flavored ballad, "Waiting for That Railroad" — were completed by producers such as Ed Stasium and Jean Beauvoir, who both worked with the Ramones. Joan Jett, the E Street Band's Steven Van Zandt,



drummer Richie Ramone, and members of Cheap Trick and the Dictators are among the friends and fans who contributed new overdubs.

Protracted negotiations over some demos, originally done by Joey with producer Dan-

iel Rey, delayed work on the album until 2009. Stasium says one plan was to recruit stars from "very popular bands influenced by Joey." Instead, "We got friends who were really friends of Joey." Stasium recorded those overdubs in New

York in 2010, the week after a Joey Ramone Birthday Bash show.

The vintage of the material is "all over the place," says Leigh, who has led his own band, the Rattlers, and plays on *Ya Know?* He taped Joey's slow-dance version of the Ramones holiday hit "Merry Christmas (I Don't Want to Fight Tonight)" in the mid-Eighties on a four-track cassette deck in

"He was getting matured, more soulful, in his voice," says one contributor.

the singer's apartment. The Dictators' Andy Shernoff was watching TV with Joey there in the early Nineties when they started co-writing the delicate "Trembling." "He was getting matured, more soulful, in his voice," Shernoff says. "He would have gone more in that direction. He enjoyed singing like that."

"His health was up and down," Leigh says of Joey's final years. "But when the chemo cocktail was effective, that's when he did his work. Joey had no intention of retiring. His health was holding him back. But he was finally feeling free."

DAVID FRICKE

TRIBUTE

Don Cornelius, 'Soul Train' Creator and Host, Dies at 75

SOUL TRAIN" CREATOR and host Don Cornelius died February 1st of a self-inflicted gunshot to the head, according to the Los Angeles County Coroner's office. He was 75.

A former radio DJ, Cornelius used \$400 of his own money to get *Soul Train* — an R&B, funk and soul alternative to pop revues like *American Bandstand* — on local Chicago television in 1970. "It was an idea whose time had come," says Philadelphia soul pioneer Kenneth Gamble, who



co-wrote *Soul Train*'s theme song after the show went national in 1971. "Thank God, it's better today, but at that time, it was hard to get black artists national exposure."

Adds Gladys Knight, who appeared on *Soul Train*'s pilot episode, "People would tell him, 'Man, you gotta be crazy.' But he wouldn't release that dream."

Soul Train became an instant hit, providing a key platform for generations of soul, R&B and hip-hop stars — from James Brown to Mary J. Blige. "A good part of my childhood was waking up every Saturday

to see *Soul Train*," says Spike Lee, who paid tribute to the show in 1994's *Crooklyn*. "No disrespect to Dick Clark, but a lot of the artists that we wanted to see weren't getting on *American Bandstand*."

Cornelius stepped down as *Soul Train*'s host in 1993; the show went off the air in 2006. In recent years, his health declined and he went through a difficult divorce. "He was always a real humble person, so I say a prayer for him," Gamble says. "He had a life well worth living." SIMON VOZICK-LEVINSON

PROFILE



FREE BIRD
Bird (with
bassist Lewis)
in his barn-
turned-studio
in Illinois

After Dark Days and Heartache, Andrew Bird Lets the Sunshine In

Indie singer-violinist gets personal on follow-up to breakthrough album

FOR MORE THAN A DECADE, singer-violinist Andrew Bird made small, perfectly crafted albums for a small, devoted audience. "I remember going to shows in the mid-Nineties where everything sounded like, 'Fuck you, this is my guitar, and it's too loud, and it sounds really crappy, and it's out of tune,'" says the 38-year-old, who is about to release his sixth album, *Break It Yourself*. "Lyrically, it was a lot of 'You screwed me over.' I remember thinking, 'Are you serious? How can you do this every night and mean it?'"

So no one was as surprised as Bird when, in 2009, he swept through the chamber-pop door kicked open by bands like Arcade Fire. *Noble Beast*, his fifth solo album, sold 159,000 copies; he spent the next year singing his strange, pretty tunes at festivals and in huge rooms from Milwaukee to Shanghai. "It's a weird existence," he says, killing time before a photo shoot in New York. "You play the show, you empty yourself, and afterward you're like, 'Where are my friends?'"

The 165-date tour kicked off in the wake of a brutal breakup. If Bird thought the road would help, he was wrong: By the end, the sensitive, introverted singer was often performing with a fever and limping from an onstage heel injury. "I think he just ran himself ragged," says bassist Mike Lewis. "He'd had a relationship change – that wasn't a small thing. Being out and busy can be a false escape – because

**"You play the show,
and afterward you're
like, 'Where are my
friends?'"**

all that shit's just waiting for you. As soon as you're not busy anymore, it's all there."

When the tour wrapped in 2010, Bird relocated from his hometown of Chicago to Venice, California, to recuperate. "Those years between when *Noble Beast* came out and up until about a year ago were pretty dark times," says Bird. "I was gutted, empty, burnt out. It was about relationships – feeling like you'd done such a good job of being self-sufficient that you're invulnerable, but also desolate."

He got into a routine of biking on the boardwalk and writing his most personal songs ever – mostly leaving behind the elliptical lyrics about science and ancient history that packed his earlier LPs. "There are lines on this record that I had declared to myself I'd never use," he says. "I'm like, 'Screw it, just say it.'"

By the end of that summer, Bird had enough songs to start an album and brought his band members – Lewis, multi-instrumentalist Martin Dosh and guitarist Jeremy Ylvisaker – to his family's 400-acre Illinois farm. Staying up late in the studio he built in a century-old barn, they bashed out the bulk of the loose, confessional *Break It Yourself*.

These days, Bird – who married designer Katherine Tsina in 2010 and recently became a father – is a lot less miserable. "I've had a couple of moments where I'm like, 'Holy shit, I feel like I'm getting better at life,'" Bird says. Adds Lewis, "It's almost night and day. He's elevated beyond the sea of shit that he was dealing with in those two years." In March, Bird begins a 23-city tour. "It's going to be hard," he says. "But I'm excited. I know what I'm in for."

SIMON VOZICK-LEVINSON

CHECKING IN

Sinéad O'Connor

On her raw new LP, music as therapy and worshipping Dylan

After a five-year break from recording, Sinéad O'Connor is back with her strongest album in years, *How About I Be Me (And You Be You)?* "I'd prefer to call it *How About I Be Me and You Fuck Off*," says the Irish singer, "but Walmart wouldn't stock us."

HARD TIMES It's been a tough winter for O'Connor, who wed fourth husband Barry Heridge in a quickie Las Vegas ceremony in December, split with him after two weeks (they later reconciled) and reportedly attempted suicide in January. "I'm really unwell and in danger," she wrote on Twitter. But she seems to be feeling much better now. Says the singer, "Music is therapy."

MIXING IT UP The tunes on *How About I Be Me* showcase O'Connor's range – from "4th and Vine," a pretty folk-rock love song, to "Reason With Me," a harrowing junkie confession. "I only write very rarely, but these came from a concentrated time of writing," she says. "There are some ro-



O'Connor

mantic songs, there are some character songs and there are songs which are more spiritualized and more politicized."

WHAT ABOUT BOB?

O'Connor's website features a "Letters to Bob Dylan" section where she airs her thoughts about her all-time favorite musician ("Despite your main feature being sexeliciousness, you're also not a bad ou'l sayer of songs"). "I'm sure he doesn't bother reading my bloody website, but it's important to thank the man," she says. "He didn't give a shit what people thought, and early on he was good at tuning out his critics. Whereas I'm a fucking idiot, and it's taken me 25 years."

AUSTIN SCAGGS

IN THE STUDIO



VOODOO CHILE
Auerbach, guitarist
Brian Olive and Dr.
John (from left) at Easy
Eye in Nashville

Dr. John Conjures Up Some New Voodoo With Black Keys Frontman

Big Easy R&B master cuts *Locked Down* with Dan Auerbach and friends

A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO, Dr. John's granddaughter tried to turn him on to the Black Keys. The album she gave him sat on his bedside table for a year, but when the New Orleans R&B great finally gave it a spin, he was blown away. "I thought it was very mystical," says Dr. John, leaning on his cane – which is adorned with trinkets, including his backstage wristband from 1976's Last Waltz concert – in the control room of Easy Eye Sound, Keys frontman Dan Auerbach's Nashville studio. "I didn't know how old those guys were in years, but I knew they got old souls."

Around the same time, Auerbach and a friend were discussing their mutual affection for Dr. John, who was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame last year. "He was like, 'Man, you should make a record with him,'" Auerbach recalls. "I said, 'Good idea!'" Auerbach reached out to John's management, and now, two years later, the pair are preparing to release *Locked Down* – a gritty brew of New Orleans R&B, psychedelia and voo-

doo that recalls John's greatest LPs, like 1968's *GRIS-GRIS* and 1974's *Desitively Bonnaroo*. "In the material world, shit don't be connected," John says. "But in the spirit kingdom, it connects, and if you let that roll, some shit happens that wouldn't ever happen."

The duo met in New Orleans last year, and Auerbach was impressed by the 70-year-old's fully intact musical mojo. "He played on this out-of-tune

"His level of musicianship is off the charts," says Auerbach.

piano, and when he sits behind that fucking instrument, it's magic," says Auerbach. "Then he went off on some conspiracy theories – he's still into that weird shit he put into the lyrics on his first few records."

This fall, Auerbach assembled a band at Easy Eye that included the Black Keys' touring bassist Nick Movshon and keyboardist Leon Michels – plus Auerbach himself on guitar for several tunes. When John arrived, they had no songs and no expectations. "Expectations always lead to disap-

pointments," says John, smiling. "That's an old saying, and sayings don't get old unless they're true."

Auerbach suggested that John – whose friends call him by his real name, Mac Rebennack – lay off the piano and play Wurlitzer or Farfisa organ instead. "Mac's catchphrase for the whole session was 'Don't matter,'" says Auerbach. "Hey, Mac, you mind playing the Farfisa? 'Don't matter.'"

In just nine days, the group tore through the album's 10 basic tracks. Auerbach pushed John to get more personal with his songwriting, which resulted in intensely emotional lyrics like the ones to "My Children, My Angels" and "God's Sure Good," where he growls, "God's been good to me/Better than me to myself."

Other highlights of the set include "Eleggua" and "Ice Age," swaggering jams born of both musicians' love for African rhythms. "Mac's level of musicianship is off the charts," says Auerbach. "All the parts he came up with were right on point, right behind the beat where you wanted to hear it. So I knew right away there was no waiting around on Mac. We were all pushing forward."

AUSTIN SCAGGS

STUDIO NOTES

Justin Vernon penning songs with Alicia Keys



Vernon and Keys have been writing songs – and the Bon Iver frontman would love to include the

R&B superstar on a major new project he's plotting. "I have a big idea to do an American songbook of the greatest women singers," Vernon recently said. "There are so many: **Casey Dienel** from **White Hinterland**, **Bonnie Raitt**, **Alicia**." He's also working on new material with his side projects **Shouting Matches** and **Volcano Choir**. But don't expect another Bon Iver LP anytime soon. "I don't have songs written yet," he said. "I'm guessing three years, but it could be five. It just depends when the songs come about. I sort of have to wait till they reveal themselves."

Train prep follow-up to "Hey, Soul Sister"



Train's fifth album, 2009's *Save Me, San Francisco*, went platinum thanks to ukulele-powered pop smash "Hey, Soul Sister" – but follow-up LP *California 37*, due this spring, sounds more like their 1998 debut. "It's similar to our first record – very moody, very acoustic-driven," says singer **Pat Monahan**. Several new tunes feature prominent mandolin parts, including the breakup anthem "The Fog" and "Sing Together," about recent tragedies in Monahan's family. The singer is most excited about "Bruises," an emotional track about running into a high school classmate 10 years later. "It's the best thing I've written, if not ever, certainly on this record," Monahan says. "When I heard the demo, I cried immediately. Like, 'Oh, my God, that's my life.'"

Elton John hits studio with T Bone Burnett



John and long-time lyricist **Bernie Taupin** recently spent several weeks in the studio with T Bone Burnett, who produced John's **Leon Russell** collaboration, *The Union*. The plan, according to a post on Taupin's website? "Throw some stuff at the wall and see what sticks."

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pump a little.



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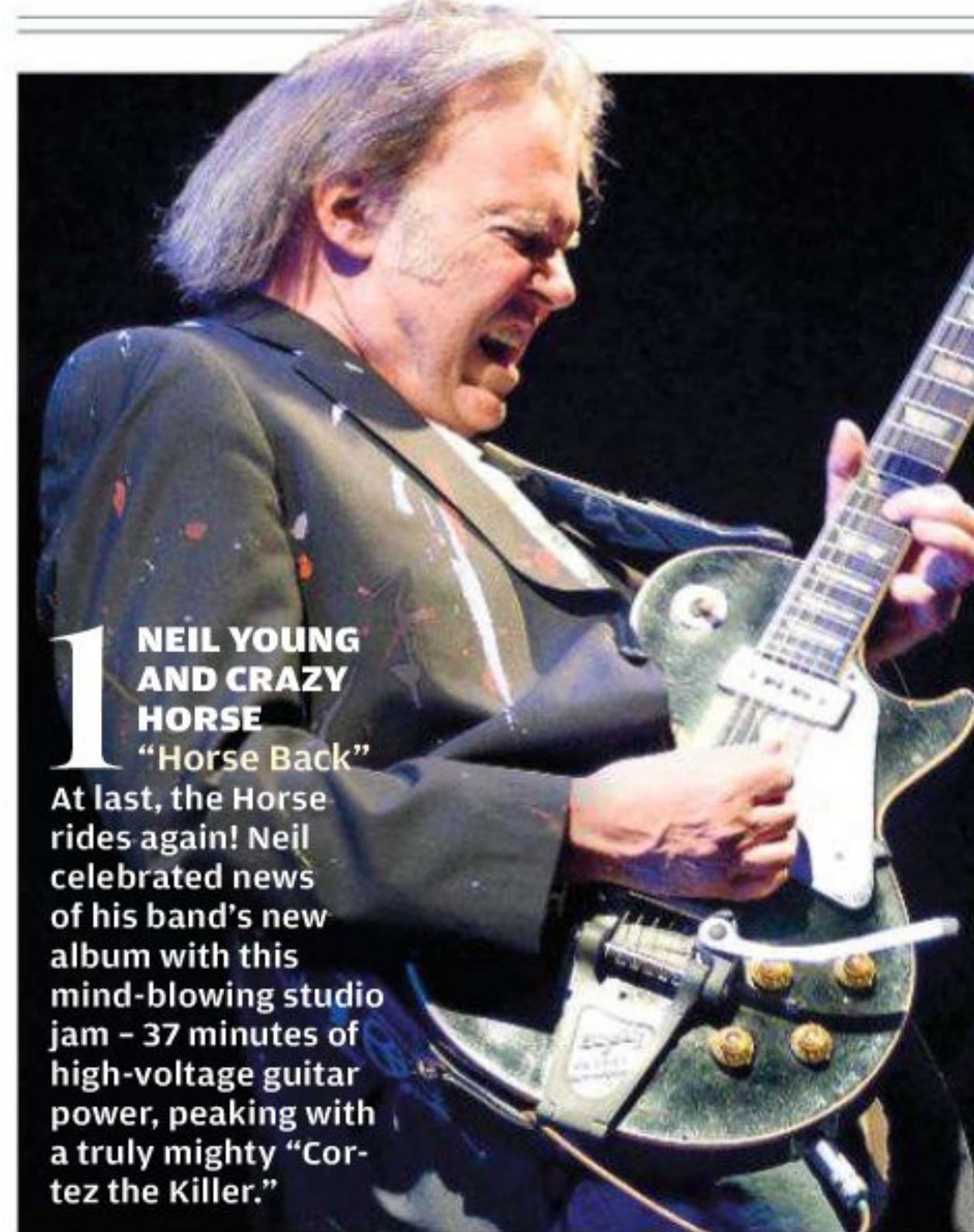
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RS PLAYLIST

OUR FAVORITE SONGS, ALBUMS AND VIDEOS RIGHT NOW



1 NEIL YOUNG AND CRAZY HORSE "Horse Back"

At last, the Horse rides again! Neil celebrated news of his band's new album with this mind-blowing studio jam - 37 minutes of high-voltage guitar power, peaking with a truly mighty "Cortez the Killer."



2 M.I.A. "Bad Girls"

If you thought flipping the bird at the Super Bowl was badass, just wait till you hear Maya's new Bolly-hood thumper. It's her wild-est, catchiest jam since "Paper Planes."

3 ALEX CHILTON "The EMI Song"

Not long before he formed Big Star, Chilton began making a solo album that never saw the light of day - until now. The highlight? This gentle, Beatles-ish ballad, a showcase for Chilton's angelic melodies.



7 THE 2 BEARS "Be Strong"

If Deee-Lite were two chubby British dudes, they'd totally be Hot Chip co-founder Joe Goddard's new side project. It's all groovy disco'd-out house beats, sweet melodies and rubbery synths.

4 BILL CALLAHAN "So Long, Marianne"

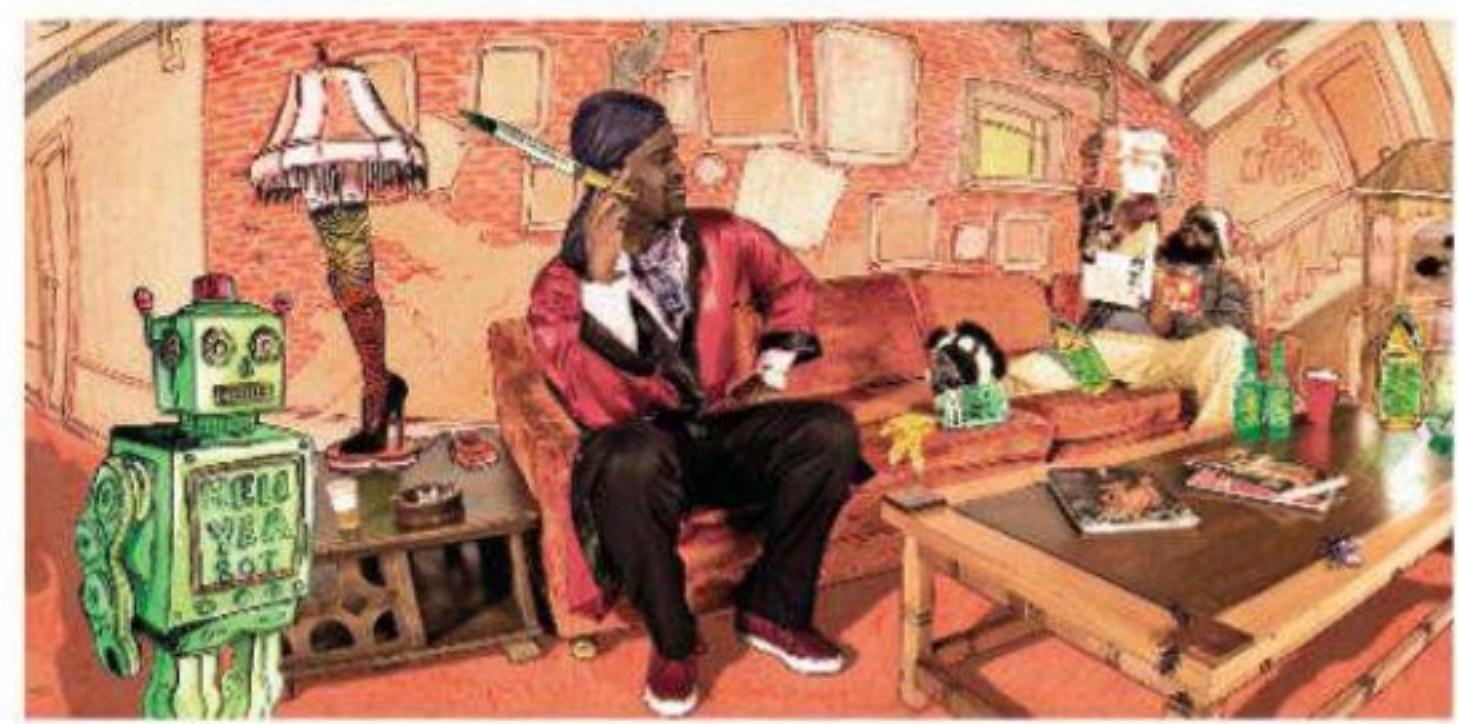
Deep-voiced singer-songwriter dude Callahan tackles the 1968 classic by deep-voiced singer-songwriter god Leonard Cohen. It's so perfect we're shocked it hasn't happened before.

6 THE BLACK KEYS "Gold on the Ceiling" video

In the dynamite video for this T. Rex-flavored *El Camino* highlight, the Keys rock out like their lives depend on it. No guest stars, no special effects, just awesomely pure old-school rock & roll.

8 FIRST SERVE "Pushin' Aside, Pushin' Along"

This easy, breezy rap tune reminds us of De La Soul's classic LPs - probably because it's from a new side project formed by De La MCs Posdnuos and Dave. Nostalgic vibes all day long.



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Q&A

LMFAO's Redfoo

On growing up Motown, rocking the Super Bowl and annoying Mitt Romney

By Austin Scaggs

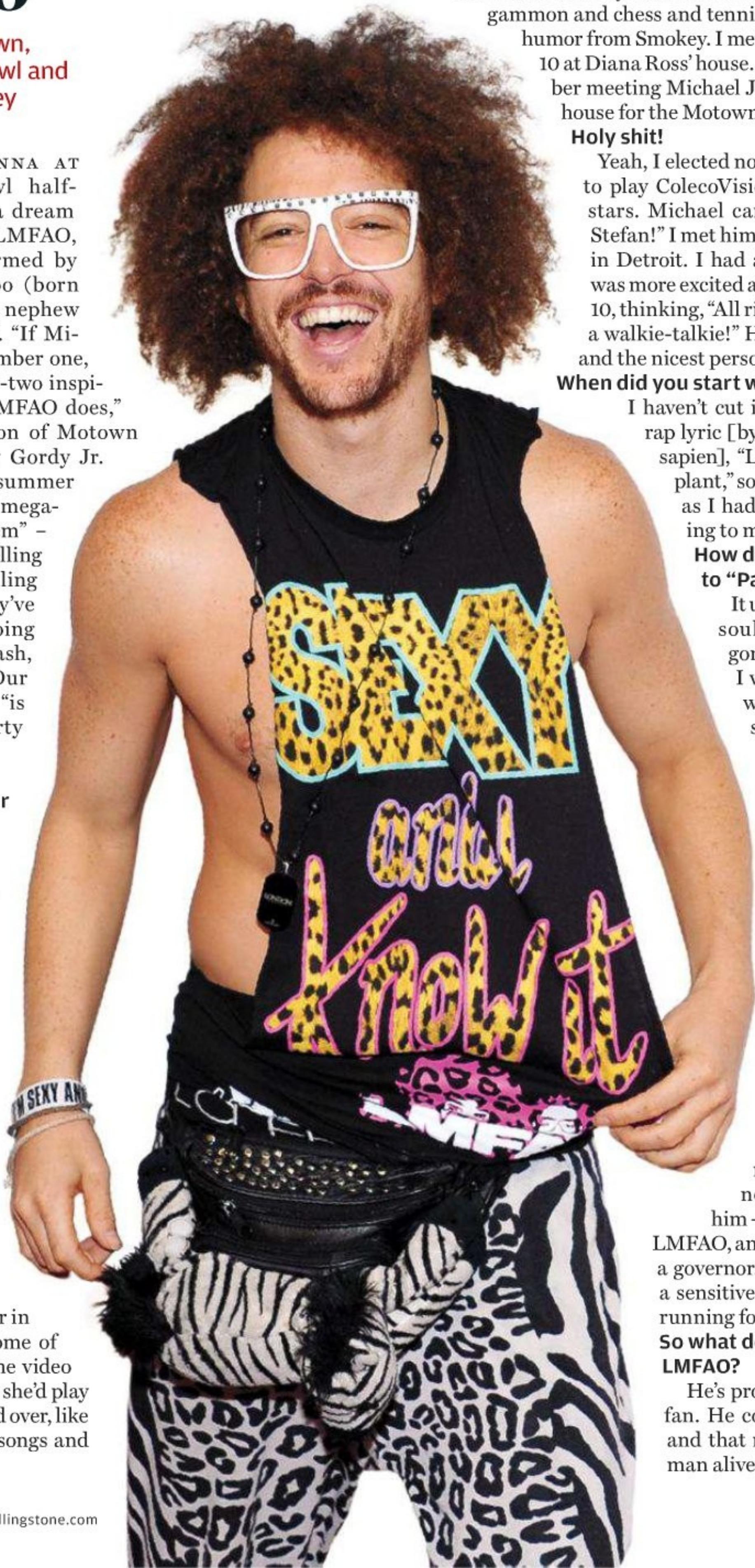
JOINING MADONNA AT her Super Bowl half-time show was a dream come true for LMFAO, the dance-pop duo formed by rapper-producer Redfoo (born Stefan Gordy) and his nephew Sky Blu (Skyler Gordy). "If Michael Jackson is our number one, Madonna is the number-two inspiration for everything LMFAO does," says Redfoo, 36, the son of Motown Records founder Berry Gordy Jr. The pair blew up last summer with their Number One mega-hit, "Party Rock Anthem" – the year's second-best-selling single after Adele's "Rolling in the Deep" – and they've kept the good times going with their follow-up smash, "Sexy and I Know It." "Our mission," says Redfoo, "is to make the world a party planet."

What went through your mind as Madonna was riding on your shoulders?

I don't know how many people were in the stadium, but they didn't exist. All that existed was me and Madonna. In rehearsal, she said, "If you were working out more, you could lift me a little easier." Her biceps were way more cut up than mine. She was like, "Get a jump-rope."

Growing up, were there tons of stars around your house?

Yes, on my dad's side. I grew up with my mother in Pacific Palisades, the home of *Baywatch*. She started the video department at Motown – she'd play the same sections over and over, like a sampler. I learned the songs and imitated them.



So you didn't have much of a relationship with your father?

I'd go there on vacation, and I lived with him for a while. When you don't see your father a lot, you hang on to his every word. He made me memorize "If—" by Rudyard Kipling.

You must have met some Motown icons through him, right?

Yeah. I saw Smokey Robinson all the time. We'd play backgammon and chess and tennis – I learned a lot of my humor from Smokey. I met Run-DMC when I was 10 at Diana Ross' house. The first time I remember meeting Michael Jackson was at my dad's house for the Motown 25th afterparty.

Holy shit!

Yeah, I elected not to go to the 25th show to play ColecoVision and throw Chinese stars. Michael came up and said, "Hey, Stefan!" I met him again later, at Hitsville in Detroit. I had a walkie-talkie, and he was more excited about it than I was. I was 10, thinking, "All right, calm down, it's just a walkie-talkie!" He was nerdy and sweet and the nicest person in the world.

When did you start working on your Afro?

I haven't cut it since 1995. I heard a rap lyric [by Del the Funky Homosapien], "Let my hair grow like a plant," so I let it do its thing. Soon as I had it, fine girls were talking to me.

How did you write the hook to "Party Rock Anthem"?

It used to be, "I feel it in my soul tonight/Everybody's gonna have a good time."

I wanted a song for when we walked into a party, so I thought, "Party rock is in the house tonight/Everybody just have a good time." That "just" was key. I made it a command, to focus people on what to do now that we're here together. Our lyrics are very calculated, even if they appear simple.

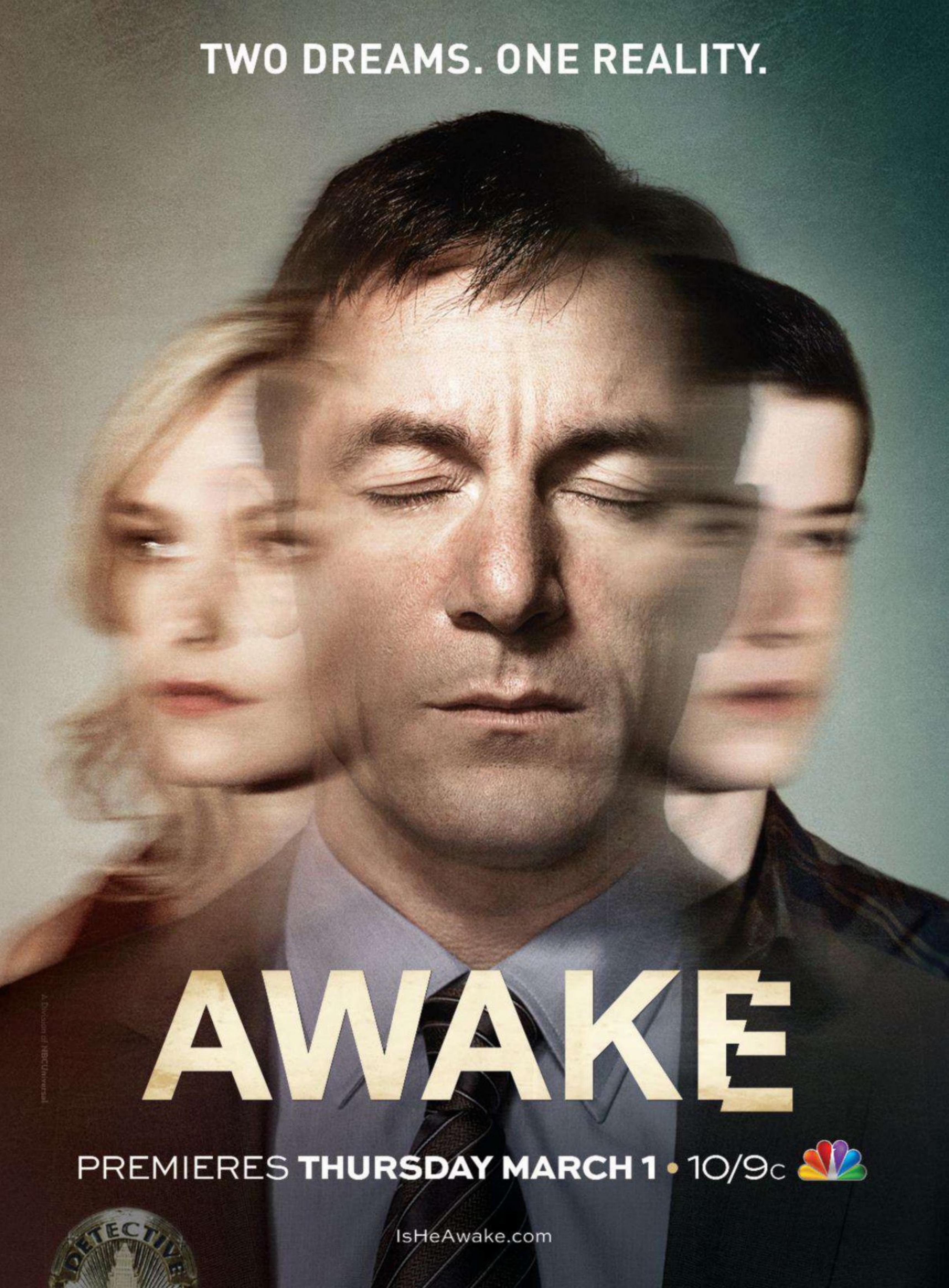
Sky Blu once got into an altercation with Mitt Romney on a plane. What happened?

It was about how he reclined his seat. Romney was sitting behind him – he didn't know we were LMFAO, and we didn't know he was a governor. They talked it out. It's a sensitive situation, because he's running for president.

So what does your dad think of LMFAO?

He's probably our number-one fan. He couldn't be more proud, and that makes me the happiest man alive.

TWO DREAMS. ONE REALITY.



AWAKE

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"I do destroy men. I'm like a praying mantis. They fuck me, and then I eat them." —Ke\$ha

Random Notes

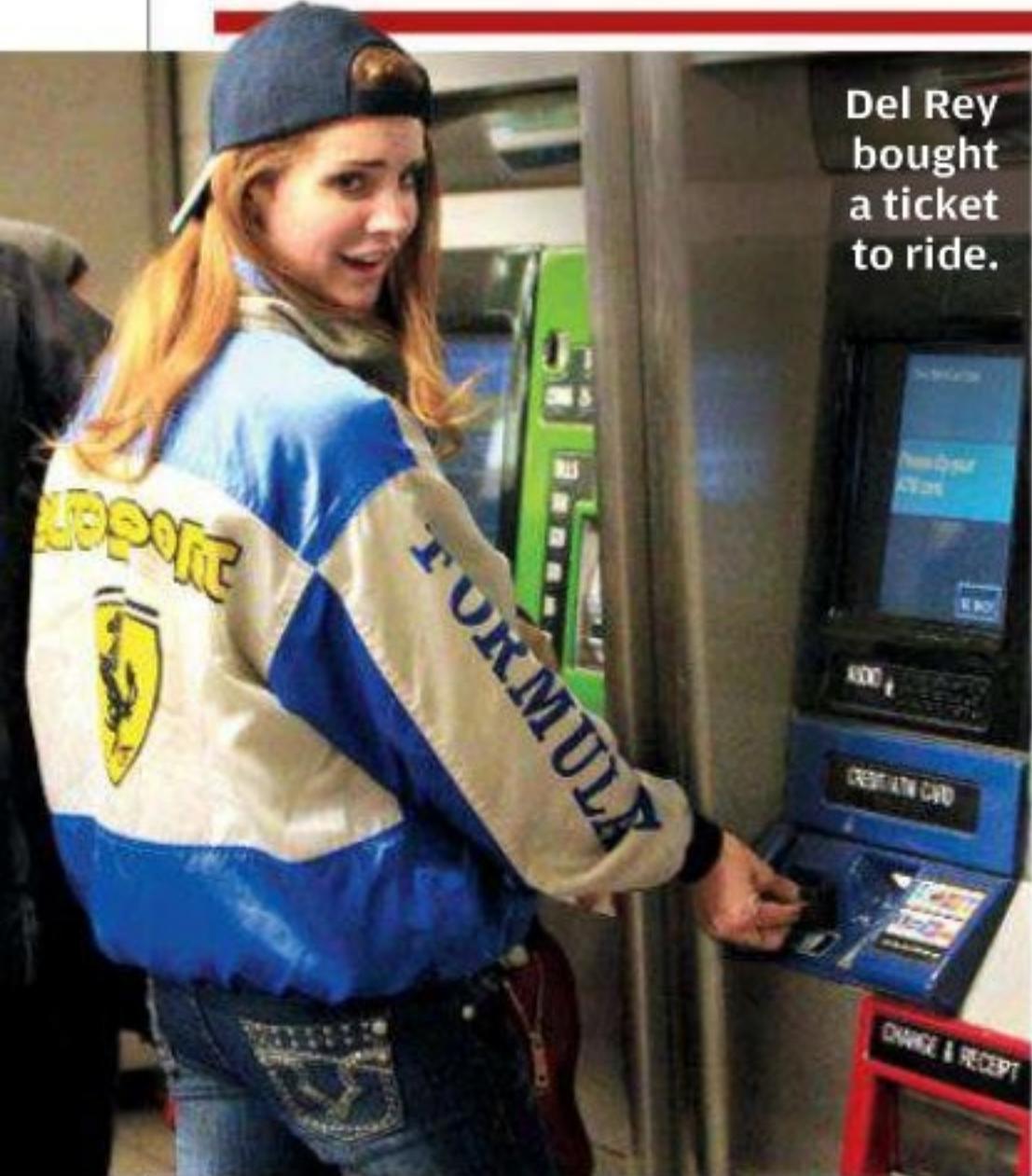
It's only rehearsal, but Eddie Van Halen might as well jump!



Hagar and Weir jammed on the Dead gem "Loose Lucy."

Viva Van Halen

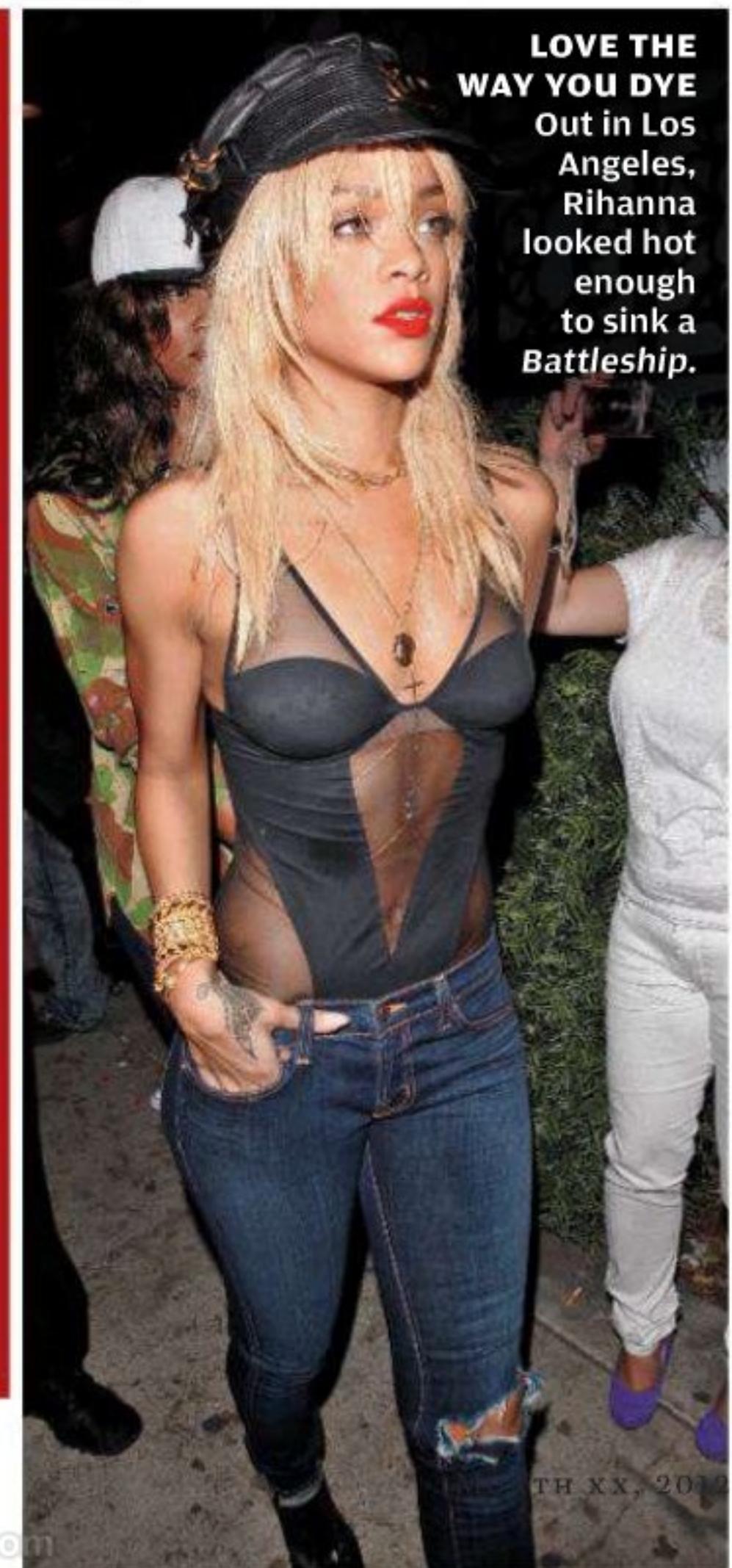
Van Halen rehearsed at the Los Angeles Forum for their Roth & Roll Tour of U.S. arenas, while up in Marin County, former VH frontman Sammy Hagar sat in with RatDog's Bob Weir, uniting noodle-dancers and chicken-footers for the first time.



Del Rey bought a ticket to ride.



Costello stocked up on this year's models.



LOVE THE WAY YOU DYE
Out in Los Angeles, Rihanna looked hot enough to sink a Battleship.

Takin' It to the Streets

Not all stars have chauffeurs and bag-handlers! Elvis Costello lugged a sack of iCrab around Manhattan after an Apple Store spree, and Lana Del Rey let the subway take her body downtown.

Hollywood Bowl

Before the New York Giants sent the New England Patriots packing on Super Bowl Sunday, Katy Perry and other football connoisseurs invaded Indianapolis for some pigskin parties. Jane's Addiction rocked a ROLLING STONE gala along with the Roots, while Kelly Clarkson killed on a Francis Scott Key classic known as "The Star-Spangled Banner" and Lenny Kravitz kicked off his pregame set with the wide receiver's lament, "Are You Gonna Go My Way?"



Perry Farrell practiced his touchdown dance onstage.



An ambivalent Perry cheered for both teams from the sidelines.



Kravitz and Clarkson let love rule in Indy.



Skrillex dropped the bass on his followers.

Skrillex Blows Up

"Anyone know where the secret show is?" tweeted the dubstep sprite known as Skrillex before his clandestine gig in New York. Mobs of hardcore fans and models were blindfolded, then shuttled five minutes to a basement club, where Skrillex DJ'd into the wee hours.



DARKNESS FALLS

Glam superman Justin Hawkins plunged back into the welcoming arms of still-loyal fans at the Darkness' reunion show in Philly.

Before I get married I want to:



EX-L model shown. *23 city/31 hwy mpg for 2WD models. Based on 2012 EPA mileage estimates. Use for comparison purposes only. Do not compare to models before 2008. Your actual mileage will vary depending on how you drive and maintain your vehicle. ©2011 American Honda Motor Co., Inc.

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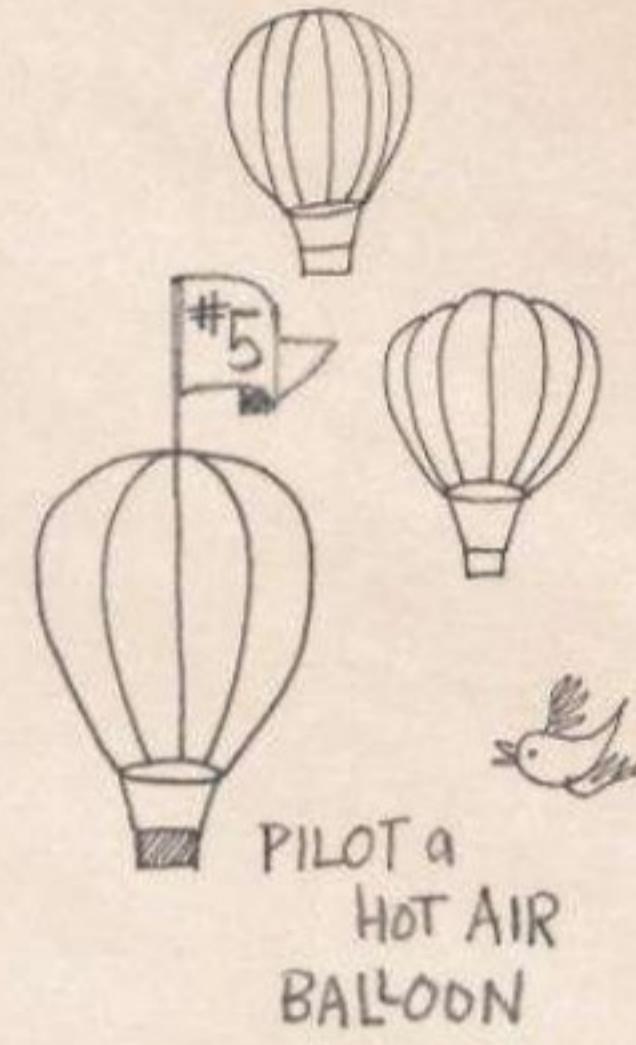
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She's Gonna Make It After All

With a genius new season of '30 Rock,' Tina Fey is nearing the Oprahsphere
By Rob Sheffield

AS "30 ROCK" GETS OFF to a rip-roaring start this season, the question looms larger than ever: Is Tina Fey's Liz Lemon the most bizarrely nonimitated sitcom character of our time? It's a mystery that gets stranger as Fey keeps blowing up as a cultural icon. Given how she's turned into such a fiercely re-

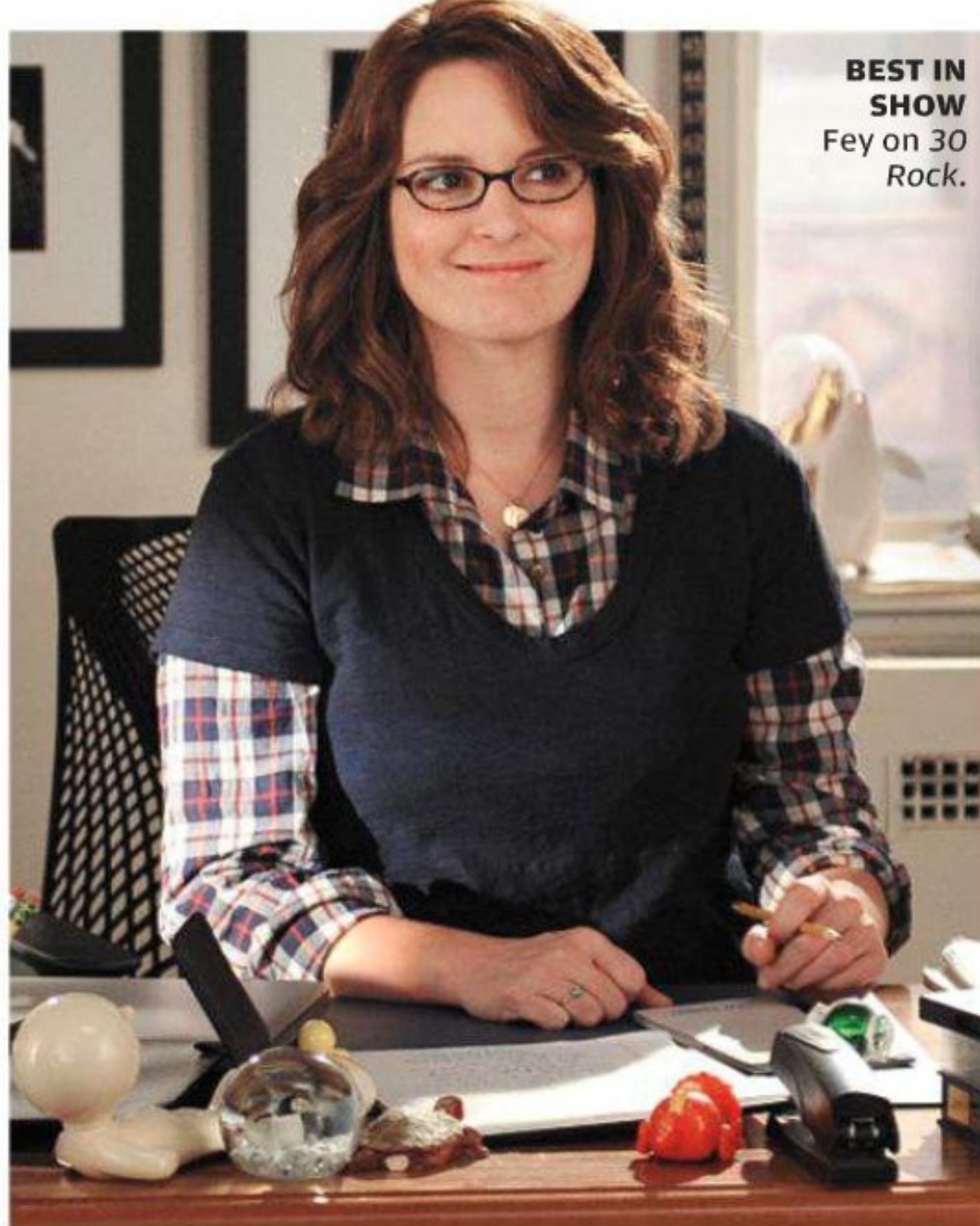
30 Rock
Thursdays, 8 p.m., NBC

vered, identified-with, hero-worshipped presence, you'd think somebody would at least try to duplicate the formula. At this point, she's practically Oprah with librarian glasses.

But where are all the faux Liz Lemons? (Besides real life, where they're pretty much freaking everywhere.) If you look at this season's much-ballyhooed glut of single-gal sitcoms — *2 Broke Girls*; *Whitney*; *Are You There, Chelsea?* — they're taking place in a world where Tina Fey doesn't exist and *30 Rock* isn't on the air.

Liz Lemon has always been compared to Mary Richards of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, another brainy, clumsy, proudly independent woman trying to prove she's gonna make it after all. She gave her fans the same mix of intense devotion and identification, and the networks took notice. So every time Mary threw her hat up into the air, it landed on a *Mary Tyler Moore* knockoff: *Rhoda*, *Phyllis*, *Karen*, *Sara* and more. Yet Liz Lemon, like Fey herself, remains a fluke of the universe. Jack Donaghy (Alec Baldwin) once described her as "the Picasso of loneliness."

Part of it is that Liz Lemon is just a cipher for the character "Tina Fey," played by Tina Fey on *Saturday Night Live* since the early 2000s. Fey was a sensation from the moment she hit the Weekend Update desk, playing up her own cerebral,



BEST IN SHOW
Fey on *30 Rock*.

hyperwordy brand of humor, and her megafunctional geek-overdog personality. She was already *SNL*'s head writer before she took her spot in front of the camera, and that's the key to her mystique. Mary Tyler Moore played a hardworking TV-news producer, but nobody expected her to break stories in real life.

Anyone watching *30 Rock* always knew Tina Fey was playing a fictionalized version of herself, a workaholic comedy writer who also plays one on TV. She's the boss; Liz Lemon just works here. The big difference between them is Liz's disastrous love life, yet even when Liz suffers rejection, we know it's because Fey planned it that way. The losers she dates are really just fodder for her banter with Jack. So much as we love Liz Lemon, we really just love her for resembling Tina Fey.

She's gotten even more famous because of her bestselling memoir, *Bossypants*. It lit a fire under the already raging Tina Fey cult, no doubt in part because it came out when Oprah was going off the air and we needed a new American superhero queen.

Bossypants took the Tina Fey adoration to a new level, and that hovers all over this season of *30 Rock*. It's kind of like when Phil Collins went back to Genesis after turning into a solo superstar. Indeed, devoting the first few episodes this year to Tracy Morgan's homophobic meltdown was the equivalent of Collins letting Tony Banks take a long keyboard solo.

The genius of *Bossypants* — and the main way it's different from *30 Rock* — is that it's about being a young woman in the big city, but it's *not about dating*. Talk about an underexploited market strategy. That's an undeniable reason why the book was a success. Fey has a few teen-dating stories, but once she gets out of college, it's all work, work, Lorne Michaels, work, Alec Baldwin and work. Then we're on her honeymoon and we meet her in-laws and yada yada back to work. Genius. She is devoid of victim energy — if she doesn't feel sorry for herself, nobody else should, and that helps make her insanely charismatic. As she writes, "Remember the beginning of the story where I was the underdog? No? Me neither."

We don't feel bad for Liz Lemon's romantic humiliations because we know Liz's problems are just an excuse for Tina Fey to flex her virtuosity. That's why her act is impossible to replicate, though people are inevitably going to try as the cultural stakes get too big to ignore. *Bossypants* is already inspiring successors — Mindy Kaling's hilarious memoir does for *Bossypants* what Pascal did for Montaigne, or what Blue Öyster Cult did for Led Zeppelin. So far, Liz Lemon is out there all by herself. But then, Picasso was hard to imitate too. RS

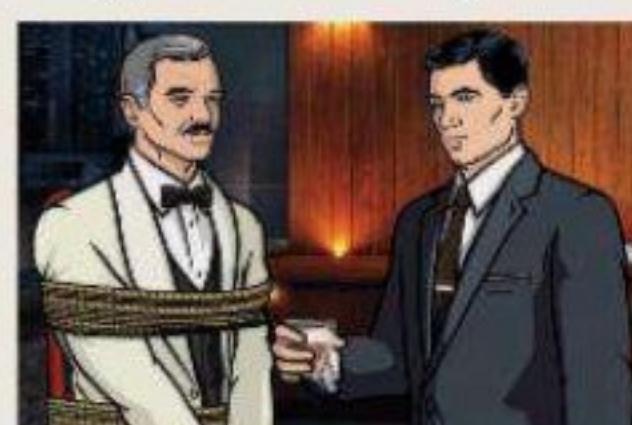
WATCH LIST

The 'Archer' Supremacy

Archer
Thursdays, 10 p.m., FX

Has any cartoon parody taken it as far as *Archer*? Not with this many filthy jokes, that's for sure. ISIS agent Sterling Archer battles the forces of evil while trading dirty quips with his fellow spies and complaining about how the co-op board won't let him install a Batpole in his apartment.

Archer has always been a riot — the perfect American James Bond spoof — but now it has a newfound swagger. One of the brilliant moves was bringing in Archer's mom's new boyfriend, none other than Burt Reynolds



Burt Reynolds' best role since *Boogie Nights*

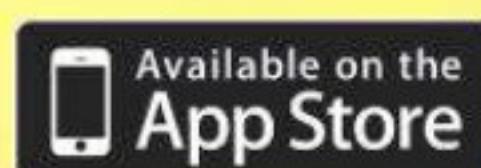
himself. The spy-master high jinks reach their peak when Archer tangles with radical Nova Scotian separatists, who might even be armed. "Armed with what?" Archer asks. "Pamphlets about Canada's reasonable gun-control laws?" RS

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Obama's War on Pot

In a shocking about-face, the administration has launched a government-wide crackdown on medical marijuana

★ *By Tim Dickinson* ★

BACK WHEN HE WAS RUNNING for president in 2008, Barack Obama insisted that medical marijuana was an issue best left to state and local governments. "I'm not going to be using Justice Department resources to try to circumvent state laws on this issue," he vowed, promising an end to the Bush administration's high-profile raids on providers of medical pot, which is legal in 16 states and the District of Columbia.

But over the past year, the Obama administration has quietly unleashed a multiagency crackdown on medical cannabis that goes far beyond anything undertaken by George W. Bush. The feds are busting growers who operate in full compliance with state laws, vowing to seize the property of anyone who dares to even *rent* to legal pot dispensaries, and threatening to imprison state employees responsible for regulating medical marijuana. With more than 100 raids on pot dispensaries

during his first three years, Obama is now on pace to exceed Bush's record for medical-marijuana busts. "There's no question that Obama's the worst president on medical marijuana," says Rob Kampia, executive director of the Marijuana Policy Project. "He's gone from first to worst."

The federal crackdown imperils the medical care of the estimated 730,000 patients nationwide — many of them seriously ill or dying — who rely on state-sanctioned marijuana recommended by their doc-

tors. In addition, drug experts warn, the White House's war on law-abiding providers of medical marijuana will only drum up business for real criminals. "The administration is going after legal dispensaries and state and local authorities in ways that are going to push this stuff back underground again," says Ethan Nadelmann, director of the Drug Policy Alliance. Gov. Lincoln Chafee of Rhode Island, a former Republican senator who has urged the DEA to legalize medical marijuana, pulls no punches in describing the state of affairs produced by Obama's efforts to circumvent state law: "Utter chaos."

IN ITS FIRST TWO YEARS, THE Obama administration took a refreshingly sane approach to medical marijuana. Shortly after Obama took office, a senior drug-enforcement official pledged to ROLLING STONE that the question of whether marijuana is medicine would now be determined by science, "not ideology." In March 2009, Attorney General Eric Holder emphasized that the Justice Department would only target medical-marijuana providers "who violate both federal and state law." The next morning, a headline in *The New York Times* read OBAMA ADMINISTRATION TO STOP RAIDS ON MEDICAL MARIJUANA DISPENSERS. While all forms of marijuana would remain strictly illegal under federal law – the DEA ranks cannabis as a Schedule I drug, on par with heroin – the feds would respect state protections for providers of medical pot. Framing the Obama administration's new approach, drug czar Gil Kerlikowske famously declared, "We're not at war with people in this country."

That original hands-off policy was codified in a Justice Department memo written in October 2009 by Deputy Attorney General David Ogden. The so-called "Ogden memo" advised federal law-enforcement officials that the "rational use of its limited investigative and prosecutorial resources" meant that medical-marijuana patients and their "caregivers" who operate in "clear and unambiguous compliance with existing state law" could be left alone.

At the same time, Ogden was concerned that the feds not "be made a fool of" by illegal drug traffickers. In that vein, his memo advised U.S. attorneys to focus on going after pot dispensaries that posed as medicinal but were actively engaged in criminal acts, such as selling to minors, possession of illegal firearms or money-laundering. The idea, as Holder put it, was to raid only those hardcore traffickers who "use medical-marijuana laws as a shield."

The Ogden memo sent a clear message to the states: The feds will only intervene if you allow pot dispensaries to operate as a front for criminal activity. States from New Mexico to Maine moved quickly to license and regulate dispensaries through

their state health departments – giving medical marijuana unprecedented legitimacy. In California, which had allowed "caregivers" to operate dispensaries, medical pot blossomed into a \$1.3 billion enterprise – shielded from federal blowback by the Ogden memo.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S RECOGNITION of medical cannabis reached its high-water mark in July 2010, when the Department of Veterans Affairs validated it as a legitimate course of treatment for soldiers returning from the front lines. But it didn't take long for the fragile federal detente to begin to collapse. The reversal began at the Drug Enforcement Agency with Michele Leonhart, a holdover from the Bush administration who was renominated by Obama to head the DEA. An anti-medical-marijuana hard-liner, Leonhart had been rebuked in 2008 by House Judiciary chair-

"Obama is now the worst president on medical marijuana," says one reform advocate. "He's gone from first to worst."

man John Conyers for targeting dispensaries with tactics "typically reserved for the worst drug traffickers and kingpins." Her views on the larger drug war are so perverse, in fact, that last year she cited the slaughter of nearly 1,000 Mexican children by the drug cartels as a counterintuitive "sign of success in the fight against drugs."

In January 2011, weeks after Leonhart was confirmed, her agency updated a paper called "The DEA Position on Marijuana." With subject headings like THE FALLACY OF MARIJUANA FOR MEDICINAL USE and SMOKED MARIJUANA IS NOT MEDICINE, the paper simply regurgitated the Bush administration's ideological stance, in an attempt to walk back the Ogden memo. Sounding like Glenn Beck, the DEA even blamed "George Soros" and "a few billionaires, not broad grassroots support" for sustaining the medical-marijuana movement – even though polls show that 70 percent of Americans approve of medical pot.

Almost immediately, federal prosecutors went on the attack. Their first target: the city of Oakland, where local officials had moved to raise millions in taxes by licensing high-tech indoor facilities for growing medical marijuana. A month after the DEA issued its hard-line posi-

tion, U.S. Attorney Melinda Haag warned the city that the feds were weighing "criminal prosecution" against the proposed pot operations. Abandoning the Ogden memo's protections for state-sanctioned "caregivers," Haag effectively re-declared war on medical pot. "We will enforce the Controlled Substances Act vigorously against individuals and organizations that participate in unlawful manufacturing and distribution activity involving marijuana," she wrote, "even if such activities are permitted under state law." Haag's warning shot had the desired effect: Oakland quickly scuttled its plans, even though the taxes provided by the indoor grows could have single-handedly wiped out the city's \$31 million deficit.

Two months later, federal prosecutors in Washington state went even further, threatening state employees responsible for implementing new regulations for pot dispensaries. U.S. attorneys sent a letter to Gov. Christine Gregoire, warning that state employees "would not be immune from liability under the Controlled Substances Act." Shocked by the threat – "It subjected Washington state employees to felony criminal prosecution!" – Gregoire vetoed the new rules. A similar federal threat in Rhode Island forced Chafee to follow suit, putting an indefinite hold on the planned opening of three state-licensed "compassion centers" to distribute marijuana to seriously ill patients.

In isolation, such moves might be seen as the work of overzealous U.S. attorneys, who operate with considerable autonomy. But last June, the Justice Department effectively declared that it was returning to the Bush administration's hard-line stance on medical marijuana. James Cole, who had replaced Ogden as deputy attorney general, wrote a memo revoking his predecessor's deference to states on the definition of "caregiver." The term, Cole insisted, applied only to "individuals providing care to individuals with cancer or other serious illnesses, not commercial operations cultivating, selling or distributing marijuana." Pot dispensaries, in short, were once again prime federal targets, even if they were following state law to the letter. "The Cole memo basically adopted the Bush policy," says Kampia, "which was only that the Justice Department will not go after individual patients."

In reality, however, the Obama administration has also put patients in the cross hairs. Last September, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms moved to deprive Americans who use medical marijuana of their gun rights. In an open letter to gun sellers, the ATF warned that it is unlawful to sell "any firearm or ammunition" to "any person who uses or is addicted to marijuana, regardless of whether his or her state has passed legislation authorizing marijuana use for me-

dicinal purposes." If your doctor advises you to use medicinal pot, in other words, you can no longer legally own a gun. Hunting advocates were outraged. Sen. Jon Tester, a Democrat from Montana, wrote a furious letter calling on the Justice Department to reassess its "chilling" policy, declaring it "unacceptable that law-abiding citizens would be stripped of their Second Amendment rights."

SINCE THE FEDERAL CRACKDOWN began last year, the DEA has raided dozens of medical-cannabis dispensaries from Michigan to Montana. Haag, the U.S. attorney for Northern California, claims the federal action is necessary because the state's legalized pot dispensaries have been "hijacked by profiteers" who are nothing more than criminals.

It's true that California has no shortage of illegal pot dealers. Nonmedical marijuana is the state's largest cash crop, raking in an estimated \$14 billion a year. And demand is growing, in part because former governor Arnold Schwarzenegger thwarted a ballot measure aimed at full legalization in 2010 by removing criminal penalties for possession of up to an ounce of pot. But instead of focusing limited federal resources on off-the-grid growers in places like Humboldt County, who are often armed and violent, Haag targeted Matthew Cohen, a medical-marijuana farmer in Mendocino who was growing 99 plants under the direct supervision of the county sheriff. As part of a pioneering collaboration with local law enforcement, Cohen marked each of his plants with county-supplied tags, had his secured facility inspected and distributed the marijuana he grew directly to patients in his nonprofit collective.

Cohen appeared to be precisely the kind of caregiver that the Ogden memo advised should be given safe harbor for operating in "clear and unambiguous compliance with existing state law." But last October, DEA agents stormed Cohen's farm in the middle of the night and cut down his crop. Sheriff Tom Allman, who learned of the raid on his turf only an hour before it was executed, was outraged. "Matt Cohen was not in violation of any state or local ordinances when federal agents arrived at his location," Allman says. In January, Haag took the fight to the next level, threatening county officials like Allman with federal sanctions. Three weeks later, county supervisors voted to abandon the program to license and monitor Mendocino's legal growers. "This is a huge step backward," says Allman.

Haag's treatment of urban dispensaries has been equally ham-handed. She recently shuttered one of the oldest dispensaries in the state, a nonprofit that serves a high percentage of female patients in Marin County, which has the nation's highest rate of breast cancer. She has threatened to seize the properties that landlords rent to legal pot dispensaries. And in San Francisco, she targeted Divinity Tree, a cooperative run by a quadriplegic who himself relies on prescribed cannabis for relief from near-constant muscle spasms. At a time of high unemployment and huge budget deficits, the move killed more than a dozen jobs and deprived the state of \$180,000 in annual tax revenue. In San Diego alone, the feds have shut down nearly two-thirds of the county's dispensaries. Statewide, the United Food and Commercial Workers Union estimates, the federal crackdown has destroyed some 2,500 jobs in California. It also sent street pric-

es soaring by at least 20 percent, putting more money in the hands of actual criminals.

In addition, the federal war on medical marijuana has locked pot dispensaries out of the banking system – especially in Colorado, home to the nation's second-largest market for medicinal cannabis. Top banks – including Chase, Wells Fargo and Bank of America – are refusing to do business with state-licensed dispensaries, for fear of federal prosecution for money-laundering and other federal drug crimes. In a House hearing in December, Rep. Jared Polis of Colorado warned Attorney General Holder that strong-arming banks will actually raise the likelihood of crime. If pot dispensaries have to work outside the normal financial system, Polis told Holder, "it makes the industry harder for the state to track, to tax, to regulate them, and in fact makes it prone to robberies, because it becomes a cash business."

The IRS has also joined in the administration's assault on pot dispensaries, seeking to deny them standard tax deductions enjoyed by all other businesses. Invoking an obscure provision of the tax code meant to trip up drug kingpins, the IRS now maintains that pot dispensaries can deduct only one expense – ironically, the cost of the marijuana itself. All other normal costs of doing business – including employee salaries and benefits, rent, equipment, electricity and water – have been denied.

The agency has used the provision to go after Harborside Health Center, one of the largest and most respected providers of medical cannabis in California. Its Oakland branch, serving 83,000 patients in conforming with state law, paid more than \$1 million in city taxes last year –

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: RUSSELL LILLIG/GETTY IMAGES; GETTY IMAGES; W.H.; GILBERT CARRASQUILLO/GETTY IMAGES; MARTIN CHILD/GETTY IMAGES; OPENHEIM, BERNHARD/GETTY IMAGES; DON FARRALL/GETTY IMAGES; JENNIFER BOOGS/GETTY IMAGES
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THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE SCARY

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Anonymous taps **FBI phone call**, posts audio online.

City of Berkeley considers moving **\$300 million** from Wells Fargo to protest too-big-to-fail banks.

White House mandates all insurance plans provide **free birth control**.

Clint Eastwood's Super Bowl ad **offends Karl Rove**.

By 2-to-1 margin, Americans **like Romney less** the more they know about him.

Vermont inmates modify police-cruiser decals to **include a pig**.

Kobayashi breaks **chicken-wing eating record**.

India's investment in **clean energy** jumps by 50 percent.

M.I.A. **flips off the Super Bowl** during halftime show.

placing it in the top 10 percent of local businesses. "It's incredibly tightly run and very, very professional," says Nadelmann of the Drug Policy Alliance. "But it's also big – and it may be that big is bad as far as the feds are concerned." Slapped with an IRS bill for \$2.5 million in back taxes, Harborside now faces bankruptcy. "It's profoundly inaccurate to charac-

points out that the Ogden memo was never meant to protect "such things as large-scale, privately owned industrial marijuana cultivation centers" like the one in Oakland. But the official makes no attempt to explain why the administration has permitted a host of federal agencies to revive the Bush-era policy of targeting state-approved dispensaries.

The crackdown on legal pot dispensaries has destroyed 2,500 jobs in California. "It's a huge step backward," says one sheriff.

terize us as a 'drug-trafficking' organization," says Harborside president Steve DeAngelo. "We are a nonprofit community-service organization that helps sick and suffering people get the medicine they need to be well. This is not an attempt to tax us – it's an attempt to tax us out of existence."

SUPPORTERS OF MEDICAL MARIJUANA are baffled by Obama's abrupt about-face on the issue. Some blame the federal crackdown not on the president, but on career drug warriors determined to go after medical pot. "I don't think the federal onslaught is being driven by the highest levels of the White House," says Nadelmann. "What we need is a clear statement from the White House that federal authorities will defer to responsible local regulation."

The White House, for its part, insists that its position on medical pot has been "clear and consistent." Asked for comment, a senior administration official

"Somewhere in the administration, a decision was made that it would be better to close down legal, regulated systems of access for patients and send them back to the street, back to criminals," says DeAngelo. "That's what's really at stake."

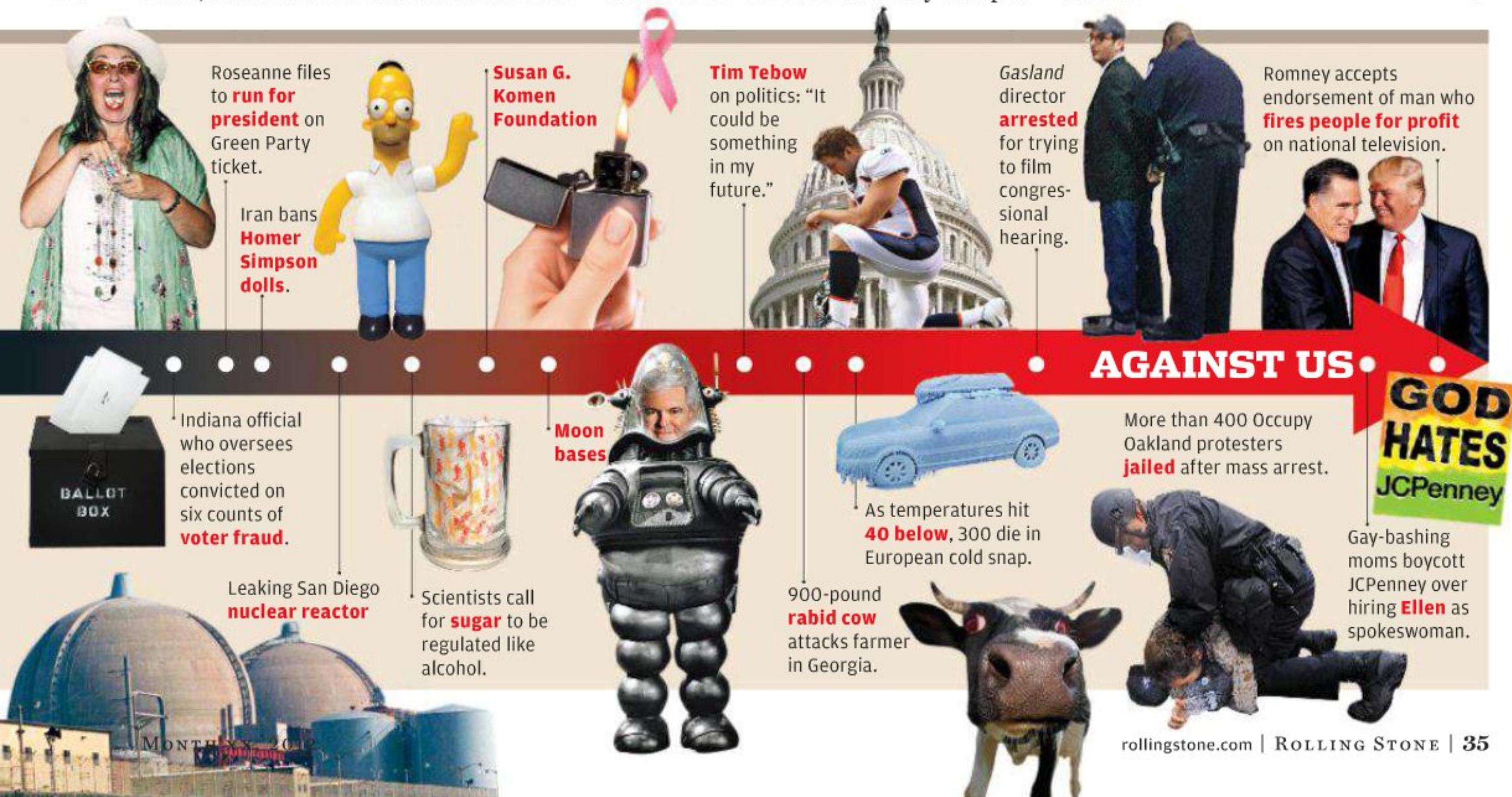
The administration's retreat on medical pot is certainly consistent with its broader election-year strategy of seeking to outflank Republicans on everything from free trade to offshore drilling. Obama's advisers may be betting that a tough-on-pot stance will shore up the president's support among seniors in November, as well as voters in Southern swing states like Virginia and North Carolina that are less favorable to drug reform. But the president could pay a steep price for his anti-pot crackdown this fall, particularly if it winds up alienating young voters in swing states like Colorado, where two-thirds of residents support medical marijuana. In November, Colorado voters will likely consider a referendum to legalize all pot use for adults – and undercutting enthusiasm for the issue will only dampen

turnout that could benefit the president. "Medical marijuana is twice as popular as Obama," notes Kampia. "It doesn't make any political sense."

The sharpest and most surprising rebuke to the administration has come from centrist governors who are fed up with the war on medicinal pot. In November, Gregoire and Chafee issued a bipartisan petition to the DEA, asking the agency to reclassify marijuana as a Schedule II drug, the same as cocaine and meth – one with a recognized medicinal value, despite its high potential for abuse. "It's time to show compassion, and it's time to show common sense," says Gregoire. "We call on the federal government to end the confusion and the unsafe burden on patients."

A petition by two sitting governors is historic – but it's unlikely to shift federal policy. Last June, after a nine-year delay, the Obama administration denied a similar petition. An official at the Department of Health and Human Services left little hope for reclassification, reiterating the Bush-era position that there is "no accepted medical use for marijuana in the United States."

For law-enforcement officials who handle marijuana on the front lines, such attitudes highlight how out of touch the administration has become. "Whether you call it medical or recreational, the marijuana genie is out of the bottle, and there's no one who's going to put it back in," insists Sheriff Allman of Mendocino, whose department had been targeted by federal prosecutors for its attempts to regulate medical pot. "For federal officials who plug their ears and say, 'No, it's not true, it's not true,' I have some words for them: You need to get over it."



YES TER DAY & TO DAY

In the time it took you to read this, Paul McCartney just wrote a new song. What makes a 69-year-old Beatle run?

BY BRIAN HIATT

PHOTOGRAPH BY NADAV KANDER

ON HIS WAY TO WORK this morning, Paul McCartney had to wait for some pedestrians at a white-striped crosswalk. They stood in groups, cameras in hand, blocking a tree-lined London street. As McCartney sat patiently in his SUV, none of them looked his way — the tourists were too busy taking pictures of themselves crossing Abbey Road.

"It's happened to me a few times," McCartney says later, with a small laugh. "It's a moment I quite enjoy. There's a good, strong metaphor there. But there's so many metaphors in my life — I don't look for them. The life of a Beatle is full of metaphors."

Resisting an urge to jump out of the car and pose with his fans, he instead heads straight onto hallowed, if distinctly musty-smelling, ground: Abbey Road's Studio Two. "Welcome to my world," McCartney says, striding through double doors at the back of a high-ceilinged, rectangular, gymnasiumlike room. He's chomping on a piece of gum. "Ancient and modern. Every time I come in here, I unravel the whole story again. This is where it all happened."

The Beatles recorded most of their music, from "Love Me Do" to "The End," in this unglamorous, white-walled basement space — and passed their initial EMI audition here almost exactly 50 years ago. Aside from some newish acoustic baffles and a different clock, it's hardly



■ PAUL McCARTNEY ■

changed. In one corner, McCartney yelled, "One, two, three, *faw!*" to start "I Saw Her Standing There"; in another, he slammed an E-major chord on one of the many pianos heard at the end of "A Day in the Life."

Right now, for no particular reason, he's playing drums. Within moments of his arrival, McCartney dashes over to his kit, grabs a pair of sticks and crashes through a few bars of a fast beat, heavy on the high-hat. It sounds distinctly Beatle-ish, or at least Wings-y.

McCartney points up at the corner staircase, which leads to the windowed control room where George Martin and the engineers worked. "That was where the grown-ups lived," he says. "Those stairs were so iconic, it's engraved in your memory like a dream."

It's a windy late-January day, but in keeping with his eternal boyishness, the 69-year-old isn't wearing a jacket — just a black North Face vest over a pressed denim button-front shirt that's neatly tucked into his dark jeans, possibly also ironed. On his feet are black running shoes with white trim: If a *Hard Day's Night* mob scene should break out, he's ready to move. His ever-fab hair is more tousled than usual, and he looks a little pale today — he's been working too hard.

"This has so many memories for me, you couldn't imagine," McCartney says. "It's unbelievable." He points to the back corner. "John standing over there, doing 'Girl.'" He sings the hook, imitating Lennon's sharp intake of breath and miming a deep puff on a joint. "People thought it was *that* — it wasn't! We just liked the sibilance of the sound. All the legendary stories that got created aren't true. I just saw some Beatles program the other night, and in the first five minutes were four mistakes. This is why we don't know who Shakespeare was or what really happened at the Battle of Hastings."

As the crosswalk incident suggests, a mythic four-headed shadow sometimes threatens to obscure Paul McCartney, actual living human — newlywed, near-billionaire, strict vegetarian, father of an eight-year-old girl (and four adult children), ageless performer of three-hour rock shows, frenetically active songwriter and recording artist, composer of ballets and symphonies, knight of the realm. With his new album, *Kisses on the Bottom*, McCartney is adding "crooner of standards" to that list — it's a jazzy collection of pre-rock tunes, with a couple of McCartney originals in that style snuck in.

He had delayed the standards album for years, in part because other people — from Ringo Starr in 1970 to Harry Nilsson in 1973 to Rod Stewart for what feels like the past thousand years — kept doing it.

Senior writer BRIAN HIATT profiled the coaches of "The Voice" in RS 1150.



HIS WAY
Recording the
standards album
*Kisses on the
Bottom* at Capitol
Studios in Los
Angeles last year

He also was hesitant to reinforce the once-prevalent image of him as a mere sentimental balladeer, the supposed flip side to John Lennon's raw rocker. "I am over it," McCartney says. "If people don't know the other side of me now, it's too late." Still, *Kisses* is a one-off. A week before the album's release, McCartney is already working on a new rock record. So far, he's been playing all the instruments himself: The bass, guitars, keyboards and drum kit set up in Studio Two are all his. "The plan was to do what I'm doing now, which is to almost immediately start into another studio album, so people don't think that that's it, I'm now in the jazz genre."

Today he's recording a song for that next album called "Hosannah" — an acoustic ballad that wouldn't be out of place on his first solo LP, 1970's *McCartney* (an-

other one where he played everything). As he puts headphones on and gets down to work — summoning that trumpetlike tone from his familiar old violin-shaped Hofner bass, pounding his foot to the beat — it's almost hard to hear him with all the ghosts hanging in the air.

But McCartney doesn't see it that way: He likes working here, and he wears the past as lightly as he can. "As far as things hanging over it, that's something you live with," he says. "I live with that. When I write a song, I have my other songs hanging over it. I suppose the minute you write a decent song, that's a curse. You're always like, 'Oh, shit, I've just written 'Eleanor Rigby,' how am I going to top that?' I think you go, 'I'm not.' You just realize you're not going to top it, but you write 'Blackbird.' You go in another direction or

whatever. If you're lucky, I've always been aware of that phenomenon, but I've never let it block me."

MCCARTNEY IS SUFFICIENTLY self-aware to grasp another irony: Unlike other pop and rock artists who've recorded standards albums, he was responsible for knocking the Great American Songbook off its shelf in the first place (with help, of course, from Lennon and Bob Dylan). "We noticed it happening," he says. "We would see people we had admired saying, 'Oh, the Beatles have ruined it for us,' and we didn't mean to do that. We were just getting on with our own thing."

"We didn't want to lay waste to the past, but it happened that way, so that people like Harold Arlen, who we greatly admired for writing things like 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow,' fell out of fashion as we came into fashion, and there was no longer such a desperate call for great writers like Leiber and Stoller, because people were starting to copy us and write their own stuff. So the Hollies and the Stones would then start writing, thinking, 'This is kind of a cool idea.' So, yeah, it did start a fashion, which tended to wipe out, regrettably, some of our favorite people."

It's the day after his recording session, and McCartney is back in Studio Two, sitting on a folding chair at a small wooden table, right between the vintage keyboards he's brought in. He's eating a bagel topped with a mix of hummus and the salty British condiment Marmite, periodically exercising what must be a knightly privilege to talk with his mouth completely full. He insists I try some of the hummus — "It's the best in the world, very creamy" — scraping a bit onto a corner of his plate: "Dip your finger in that and try it, come on!" I comply, noticing my finger shaking slightly on its way: Beatle hummus!

McCartney has been thinking lately about pre-rock standards' heavy influence on the Beatles' songwriting — he and Lennon were already in their teens before they first heard Elvis Presley, Little Richard, Chuck Berry and Buddy Holly. "We grew up watching Fred Astaire films, and then it was kind of swept aside by rock & roll," he says, biting his bagel, "but we still have that influence. The Rolling Stones were influenced by the blues, and we were influenced by rock & roll — blues, to some extent — but also, without knowing it, the melodic element of the Beatles, and some of the structural elements, came from the backs of our brains, which was this old stuff that our parents had sung."

McCartney's father, Jim, was a jazz trumpeter who had a band in the Twenties. He was also an amateur pianist, and some of Paul's earliest musical memories are of lying on the floor by his piano, listening to his father play the kind of songs Paul sings on his new album. "There's no recordings of my dad," he says. "But my soul's camera has got it. I think he was very good, but he wouldn't have thought he was good enough to be a professional. The people who hired his band obviously didn't think they were very good, because he had to keep changing its name to get another gig." Later, his dad would

tor. McCartney already knew and liked her: He had attended her wedding to his old collaborator Elvis Costello "at Elton's house." They mostly worked in L.A.'s Capitol Studios — where McCartney sang through a microphone used by Frank Sinatra and Nat "King" Cole — and in New York, where McCartney insisted on going to the studio on the day Hurricane Irene was supposed to hit. "What's missing in a lot of people who interpret this music," says Krall, "is that they just think, 'Hey, we're just singin' standards, babe,' and it's not that. It's heavier than that. Paul finds his own story in it."

One of the McCartney originals, "My Valentine," was written for Nancy Shevell, the glamorous 51-year-old American businesswoman he married last October. The first line — "What if it rained/We didn't care" — comes from something she said on a Moroccan vacation. McCartney ran over to an old piano in their hotel, where the song came out almost all at once. After two very public marriages, McCartney is reluctant to talk about the third — but he admits it's brightened his outlook.

"It has, yeah," he says, with a slow nod. "I believe in love. The Beatles sang about it; I've sung about it; everyone else sings about it. Probably you and your wife believe in it. It's a pretty popular idea, this thing! So now to find love after a divorce is great, it's very refreshing. And Nancy's great, she's intriguing, interesting, lovely, smart, emotional and

all the things you would want in a mate. She's absolutely beautiful. She's funny, she's canny, she's great, it's all there."

Shevell's reaction to McCartney's latest silly love song was understated. "She's a little shy, so she just dimples shyly," he says. "But I know she likes it. She didn't go crazy — 'Listen to this, it's a song he just wrote for me!' — but I know she appreciates it."

UP IN STUDIO TWO'S control room, the most melodic songwriter of his generation is making some seriously horrifying noise. McCartney is twisting knobs on an ancient tape machine, messing with a loop of a guitar lick he just played. He speeds it up until it becomes a beyond-Yoko shriek, slows it down until it sounds like droning sludge. He punches "stop" and smiles. "We do have fun, don't we?"

He's working with producer Ethan Johns — the tall, bearded son of producer-engineer Glyn Johns, who worked on *Let It Be* — on potential tape-loop overdubs for "Hosannah." In the corner is a Pro Tools



ANOTHER DAY
McCartney with
Nancy Shevell at
their London
wedding in October

"I BELIEVE IN LOVE," SAYS MCCARTNEY. "THE BEATLES SANG ABOUT IT; I'VE SUNG ABOUT IT; EVERYONE SINGS ABOUT IT. TO FIND LOVE AFTER A DIVORCE IS GREAT, IT'S REFRESHING."

lobby to have the Beatles cover Gershwin's "I'll Buy a Stairway to Paradise" — instead, they did songs like "Your Mother Should Know" and "When I'm Sixty-Four." "Granny music," Lennon would call it — though McCartney is quick to note that John liked the old songs too.

McCartney recorded *Kisses on the Bottom* with a veteran standards-and-jazz producer, Tommy LiPuma, who brought in pianist Diana Krall as musical direc-

■ PAUL McCARTNEY ■

setup, though Johns is also recording on analog tape. "Is that enough?" McCartney says after a few more licks. "I could go all day!"

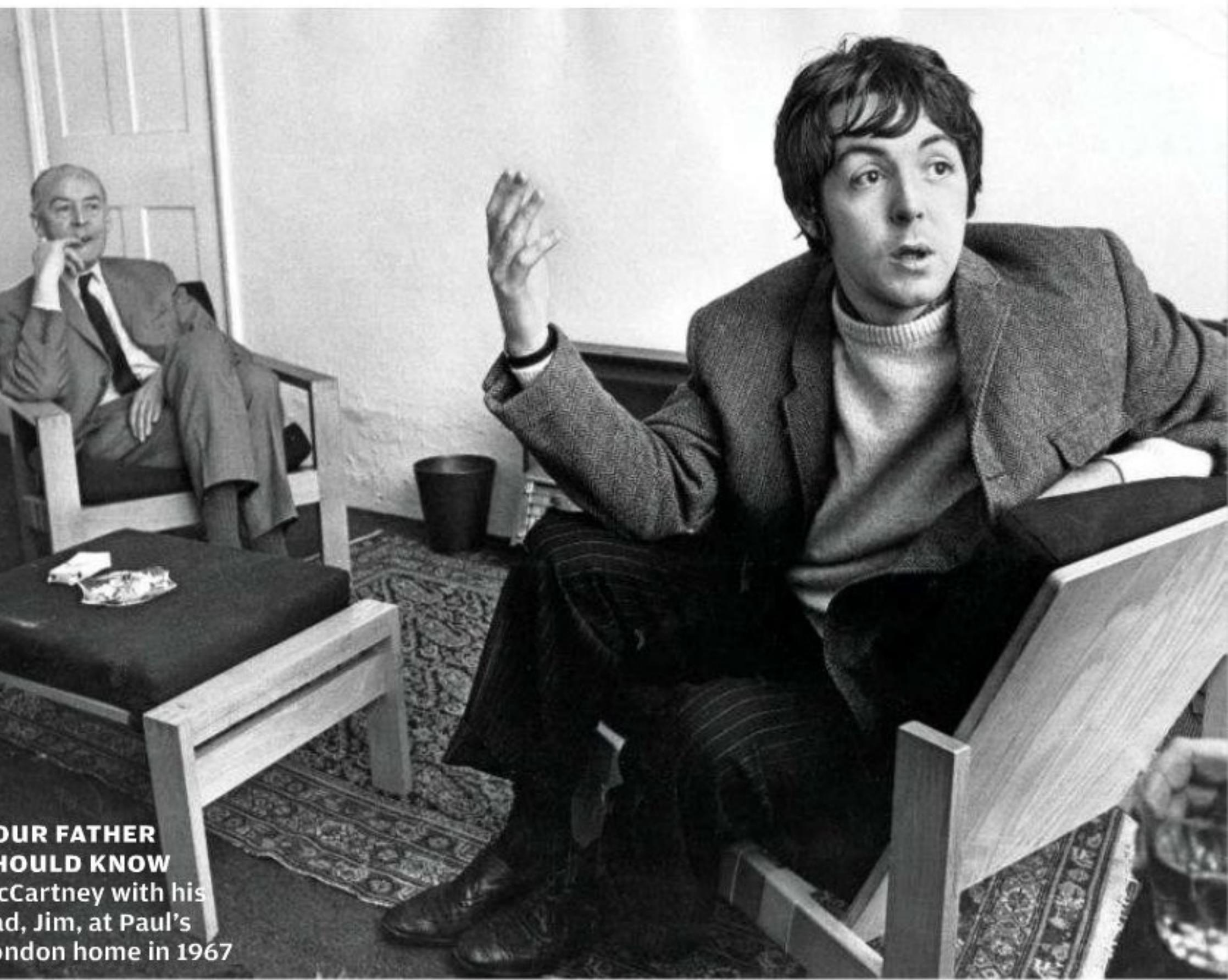
He puts down his '57 Les Paul ("There was a time when I had just one," he says when Johns admires it. "Changed me own strings!") and picks up a microphone. He loops some reverb-y "whoos" that sound like a ghostly Little Richard, then brings Johns over to harmonize on some "aaahs" and "mmms." Sped up or slowed down, they sound like a trippy nightmare. McCartney laughs as he heads down the staircase, ready to overdub some bass. "All that, and no drugs involved!"

McCartney says he's quit pot altogether, after many years and many inconvenient busts – most notably in Japan, when he famously ended up in jail for nine days. "I did a lot, and it was enough," he says. "I smoked my share. When you're bringing up a youngster, your sense of responsibility does kick in, if you're lucky, at some point. Enough's enough – you just don't seem to think it's necessary."

Did he expect it to be legal by now? "Well, I certainly requested it a bunch of times," he says. "I don't know, it's such a difficult argument. I feel like I've done my bit, and yeah, I am a bit surprised that it's not legalized. You know the argument that if booze is legal, why not that, and then the argument against it is that we don't need another [legal drug], but the argument against that is that you've got it, so don't pretend you haven't. I'm not going to be the judge of how to deal with it, somebody else can figure that out."

McCartney's "lavatory reading" these days is Keith Richards' *Life*. He hasn't gotten to the part about himself yet – and the book hasn't succeeded in persuading him to write a memoir of his own (though he did participate extensively in Barry Miles' authorized 1997 biography): "I've got really too much going on to sit around and write stuff about my past. So all of that ends up with me going, 'I can't be bothered.'" He confirms that he and Richards struck up a belated friendship a couple of years back, and batted around ideas for collaborations that will most likely never come to be. "We had some really funny ideas, and I kept saying, 'You know, Keith, this is a dangerously good idea, this is ridiculous, bordering on the brilliant.'"

McCartney doesn't share Richards' self-image as a rock & roll outlaw. Unlike Lennon, McCartney never mailed back his Member of the British Empire medal in protest of anything, and he happily accepted a knighthood in 1997 – Richards was incensed when Mick Jagger received



**YOUR FATHER
SHOULD KNOW**
McCartney with his
dad, Jim, at Paul's
London home in 1967

the same honor. "As a guy in a rock & roll band, you do ask yourself, 'Is this cool to do?'" McCartney says. "But I saw all sorts of working-class guys who were proud to be honored by the queen. That was more impressive than the supercool dudes who said, 'No way, man.' I see their argument, but it seemed to me that it's a pretty cool prize to be given by a pretty cool lady."

He's still convinced that Her Majesty is a pretty nice girl – and will perform at her Diamond Jubilee concert, marking 60 years on the throne, in June. "You have to see it from the perspective of kids who grew up with her coming to the throne," he says. "I remember being on a bus in Liverpool and hearing some kid yelling, 'The king is dead!' like in a movie. Suddenly it was this Princess Elizabeth, who we always saw as a bit of a babe. We were the right age, and we were quite impressed by her bust! Then when we met her, it was like, 'She's OK, she's cool.'"

"I've always admired the way she's handled this massive job she's got. I see the argument of anti-monarchs, because it's an amazingly old-fashioned affair, but I say to people, 'Who are we going to have lead our country in the big celebrations, opening the Olympics: David Cameron? Tony Blair? I'm not sure about that.'"

McCartney can be something of a small-c conservative: Chatting about the state of the world in Studio Two, he delivers a disquisition about government debt that's hard to imagine coming from any other rock god: "There's this whole idea of 'borrow forever,' whereas my theory,

which was instilled in me by my dad, was, 'Don't get under an obligation to anyone, ever. If you need anything, wait until you can afford it, then get it.'"

He's no right-winger, however: McCartney is baffled and angered by climate-change deniers, and vastly prefers Barack Obama to George W. Bush. He infuriated Fox News pundits when he visited the White House in 2010: After playing "Michelle" for the First Lady, he said, "It's great to have a president who knows what a library is." He even removed his turgid post-9/11 anthem "Freedom" from his set lists in the wake of the Iraq War. "When I said, 'I will fight for the right,' I meant, 'We shall overcome.' But unfortunately, immediately after that, I realized it would get construed as more militaristic. So we don't play it."

TWENTY YEARS AGO, WHEN McCartney turned 50, he remembers his then-manager pushing the idea of retirement. "It's only right," he was told. "You really don't want to go beyond 50, it's going to get embarrassing." In June, McCartney will be 70 ("I'm never going to believe I'm 70, I don't care what you say," he says. "There's a little cell in my brain that's never going to believe that"), and he still has no plans to stop touring or recording. "You get the argument 'Make way for the young kids,'" he says. "And you think, 'Fuck that, let them make way for themselves. If they're better than me, they'll beat me.' Foo Fighters

don't have a problem, they're good. They'll do their thing.

"If you're enjoying it, why do something else? And what would you do? Well, a good answer is 'Take more holidays,' which is definitely on the cards, but I don't seem to do that. I love what I do so much that I don't really want to stop. I'm just kind of casually keeping an eye on how I feel, and onstage, it feels like it's always felt. So for the time being, the band's hot, I'm really enjoying myself, still singing like I sang, not experiencing, touch wood, any sort of problems to speak of. If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

It doesn't hurt that his touring schedule has been reduced to shorter, intense bursts in recent years, largely because of his shared-custody arrangement for his eight-year-old, Beatrice. "We don't do the big sloggo tour, we don't do the big U2-Stones go-out-forever thing, and get a bit fed up with it," says McCartney, who's planning some dates for later this year. "What we do now is events and selective dates. Because of my custody situation, I can only do that. At first, we thought, 'Oh, God, is this going to be a problem?' and it's actually turned out to be some kind of a blessing."

He can see himself rocking well into his eighties. "I can imagine it," he says. "As to whether my imagination will come true, I don't know. The last couple of years, I've gotten into guitar – so there's all sorts of little things that crop up that entice you forward, and you go, 'Hmm, I'd like that.'"

I broach the idea of actually dying onstage – would he be into it? He recoils slightly, then smiles. "What kind of question is that? I must say, that's not in my imagination. Rocking on until a grand old age...the only thing would be when it's not pleasant anymore, then it would

be 'That's a good time to stop.' But it's way too pleasant at the moment. And it pays. Good gig, man. But I know exactly where you're coming from, though. How long can this go on...?"

N THE CORNER OF THE ATTIC study of McCartney's private studio in the English countryside, he's playing rockabilly riffs on a bulky old stand-up bass with white trim on its edges. The instrument traveled a long way to get here: It belonged to Bill Black, Elvis Presley's original bass player. "This is it, man – come and touch it," McCartney says. "I have an image of this and my little Hofner bass, big and little. The amount of music that we like that's been played on those two instruments..."

The bass was a gift from his late wife, Linda; on the other side of the room, the early-afternoon light shines through a stained-glass image of B.B. King in mid-solo ecstasy, adapted from a photo she took. Next to the bass is a tiny old wooden desk – taken from the Liverpool school McCartney and George Harrison attended at the same time Black was strapping that bass to the top of a 1951 Lincoln to

"YOU GET THE ARGUMENT 'MAKE WAY FOR THE YOUNG KIDS,'" SAYS MCCARTNEY. "LET THEM MAKE WAY FOR THEMSELVES! IF THEY'RE BETTER, THEY'LL BEAT ME."



STUDIO TWO Lennon, Starr, McCartney and Harrison in 1964; the stairway leading to the control room ("where the grown-ups lived") is at top left.

DAVID HURN/MAGNUM PHOTOS

tour the South with Presley and Scotty Moore.

By the staircase is a chunk of a recently torn-down London concert venue that the Beatles played – McCartney sent another piece to Starr for his birthday. "I wouldn't be allowed to keep all of this in the house," McCartney says. "Guys can be hoarders – we don't want to chuck anything out. And mine is Beatle hoarding, so I *really* don't want to throw anything out."

Settling on a cheery yellow couch near a vase of fresh flowers, he mentions being struck by Harrison's openness on the psychological havoc wreaked by Beatlemania – a frequent topic in Martin Scorsese's *Harrison* film. "I think we all experienced the trauma that George vocalized," McCartney says. "I liked to hear George talking about it, because he's getting it out in the open. For me, it's something that was more internalized, and my upbringing would lead me to say, 'Yeah, OK, it's a trauma, but get on with it.' It's like, 'Yeah, what are you gonna do, sit around and moan? You were just in the most famous band in the world. You wanted to be, it pays good money, you've had a lot of great times, and some shitty times, so what are you going to do, concentrate on the shitty times or just deal with it?'"

McCartney has seen a therapist, but not for that stuff. "I've done therapy, yeah, in divorces and things, and losing your wife. It's not to do with the Beatles, believe me."

While all four Beatles were still alive, the idea of getting back to where they once belonged was never off the table. "There was talk of re-forming the Beatles a couple of times," McCartney says casually, "but it didn't jell, there was not enough passion behind the idea. There was more passion behind retiring the Beatles than there was about re-forming. We'd all said, very convincingly, 'We've come full circle.'

"And more importantly, it could have been so wrong that it spoiled the whole idea of the Beatles, so wrong that they'd be like, 'Oh, my God, they weren't any good.' So the re-formation suggestions were never convincing enough. They were kind of nice when they happened – 'That would be good, yeah' – but then one of us would always not fancy it. And that was enough, because we were the ultimate democracy. If one of us didn't like a tune, we didn't play it. We had some very close shaves. 'Maxwell's Silver Hammer' was a pretty close shave."

Lennon and McCartney did once get together in a recording studio well after the Beatles' breakup: In 1974, McCartney stopped in while Lennon was working on *Pussy Cats* with Harry Nilsson in Los Angeles. Eventually, they tried to play some music along with Nilsson, Stevie Wonder and others. As immortalized on the infamous bootleg *A Toot and a Snore in '74* (which McCartney has [Cont. on 70]



FRESH AND CLEAN

"There's a risk you take," McBride says, "when you push the levels of decency and good taste."

NUMBER ONE WITH A MULLET

**THE UNLIKELY RISE OF DANNY MCBRIDE, THE
SMALL-TOWN HICK WHO BECAME THE RAUNCHIEST
MAN ON TELEVISION BY GAVIN EDWARDS**

PHOTOGRAPH BY TERRY RICHARDSON



INSIDE A COTTAGE WITH A QUAINTE WHITE PORCH, JUST yards north of a quiet stretch of Hollywood Boulevard, Danny McBride sits staring at himself on a television screen, declining the opportunity to eat shrimp from another man's butt hole. He's in an editing room, considering a scene from the third season of his brilliantly raunchy HBO comedy, *Eastbound & Down*. "I'm not like these characters that I portray," McBride insists, and then shrugs. "But I definitely have played a bunch of fucking assholes." ♦ None is a greater asshole than Kenny Powers, the character McBride plays on *Eastbound*: a loudmouth, racist meathead with a busted baseball career and limitless self-regard. McBride, on the other hand, is a seemingly gentle, quick-witted screenwriter who stumbled into an acting career. ♦ Here, in this friendly frat house of a production company, Rough House Pictures, which McBride shares with some old friends, including director David

Gordon Green and *Eastbound* co-creator Jody Hill, McBride, 35, is clearly the king of the slacker-film nerds. He is dressed casually, in dark corduroys, an unbuttoned blue shirt and sneakers. A half-dozen similarly garbed staffers are nearby comparing notes on the previous evening's prank phone calls – a drunk editor made a round of calls just before midnight, pretending to be McBride in crisis mode, which meant deepening his voice and adopting a bad Southern accent. The joke ended when the editor, a little too sauced, mistakenly dialed McBride. "That's your impression of me?" McBride asks. "How drunk were you?" McBride was home because he now has a five-month-old son, Declan; a year or two ago, he probably would have still been at the production office, pulling another all-nighter. "I feel most like myself in here," McBride says, talking triple-time after excessive early-morning consumption of Diet Dr Pepper. "I'm surrounded by guys I've known a long time – we just hang out and crack dirty jokes."

On *Eastbound & Down*, McBride is executive producer, co-creator and co-writer of all the episodes, and the star. He brings a demented intensity to Kenny Powers, a washed-up major-league relief pitcher who nurtures delusions of returning to the big time. "There have been many great leaders throughout history," Kenny declaims. "Jesus was dead, but then came back as an all-powerful god-zombie."

Like any true narcissist, Kenny is convinced everyone else on the planet worships him; if he's not a stand-in for the United States, he at least feels like an American antihero for our times. Or as Kenny puts it, "If there's one thing I hate, it's losing. If there are two things I hate, it's losing and getting cancer." McBride says that he and co-creator Hill "grew up around these alpha-male rednecks and all these dudes with this crazy confidence that didn't really have anything to back it up. Kenny's an amalgamation of the people that we were intimidated by growing up."

Kenny Powers is a character whose life goals haven't changed since he was 16.

While Kenny expresses the self-indulgent section of McBride's brain, McBride brings a vulnerability to Kenny to keep him from becoming unwatchably vile. Unlike most American TV characters, Kenny never pays a price for his racism, or his cocaine consumption. McBride says, "The beauty of it is having a character this fucked up, but not using him to teach anyone any lessons."

Kenny rocks a spectacular mullet, courtesy of extensions to McBride's actual hair. "We based it on what haircut would look terrible under a baseball hat," McBride explains. Kenny's other defining quality: his deep love for his Jet Ski. Some of the show's funniest sequences are of Kenny being contemplative while motoring around a lake.

The third season of *Eastbound* finds Kenny living in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, playing for a minor-league team, hoping to get called up to the majors. He's also a father, which doesn't mean he's matured – he fashions diapers out of duct tape and declares, "Hand me my son. I have a life to ruin."

For all the slapstick humor – like when Kenny tries to clean out a gunshot wound with margarita mix – *Eastbound* can be remarkably dark. McBride says, "My favorite stuff on the show are the things that aren't jokes, like when this miserable man takes a gun out on the baseball field and shoots a soccer ball. Even when we're filming it, the extras think they're going to see some-

**"I GREW
UP AROUND ALL
THESE ALPHA-
MALE REDNECKS.
KENNY POWERS IS
AN AMALGAMATION
OF THE
PEOPLE I WAS
INTIMIDATED BY."**

thing funny, but then people are silent, like, 'What did we just take part in?'"

In the second season, Kenny fled to Mexico, where he tracked down his father, played by Don Johnson. "Those guys are doing something unique and brave," Johnson says of the *Eastbound* team. "Stella Adler describes acting as a children's game, played with adult rules. But the difference with Danny is that he's playing a children's game with children's rules. That means there aren't any!"

AS A YOUNG CHILD, MCBRIDE was quiet to the point of invisibility: He stopped wearing his favorite cowboy boots when they garnered too much attention. He grew up in the small city of Fredericksburg, Virginia, a magnet for Civil War tourism. "I didn't get into trouble," McBride says. "I had a big imagination." Even as a boy he wanted to go to film school, despite not knowing anybody who was obsessed with movies the way he was. "Before we had HBO," he says, "I would sit with a boombox and record the audio of the scrambled movies. I remember riding around my neighborhood on my BMX bike, listening on my Walkman to *Mr. Mom*."

Around sixth grade, McBride started filming movies in his backyard. His mom, Kathy Rudy, recalls a film where Danny's friend Jeff jumped off the porch and broke his arm: "So you saw Jeff lying on the ground, screaming, and somebody is still filming."

When McBride played these movies recently for his wife, Gia Ruiz, he grew uncomfortable – he hadn't realized how bleak they were, filled with jokes about child abuse and murder. Around the time they were made, his parents split up – could that be the reason? "Quite possibly! I was lucky that my stepdad, Doug, came on the scene and has been an awesome dude." McBride's mom and stepdad both work as civilian support at Quantico Marine Corps Base.

Asked what qualities he inherited from his parents, McBride talks about how his mom did sermons for children at church, in the form of puppet shows. "She doesn't flex that muscle now, but I think my interest in telling stories comes from her."

And his biological father?

McBride exhales sharply. "Obviously, you get stuff from both of your parents. So my dick and balls come from him. They're probably like his dick and balls."

For college, McBride attended the North Carolina School of the Arts, a ragtag film school far from the USC/NYU power axis. In his freshman dorm, he was flanked by Jody Hill on one side and David Gordon Green on the other; all three now collaborate on various projects, including *Eastbound*. "Danny was one of the superstars of school," Hill recalls. He remembers being impressed by McBride's film *It Only Hurts When I Cry*: two rednecks get over love

troubles by hitting each other as hard as they can. (*Fight Club* was still years away.) McBride had no interest in acting – he aspired to be a director and screenwriter.

After graduating in 1998, McBride moved to L.A., hoping to achieve his film-making dreams, and found work as a waiter and as the night manager of the Holiday Inn in Burbank. In those days, he was the type of guy who liked to float down a river drinking beer at 5:30 a.m., and then show up drunk for work. After a few years of toil, he got a steady job in the movies as a motion-control cameraman – meaning

would give up and relocate to North Carolina. Right before hitting the road, he went to a Super Bowl party and met Ruiz. They started dating, and she decided to accompany him East, if only for the drive.

In Zion National Park, near Vegas, they ate some magic mushrooms: “Thirty minutes later, we were hiding in the tent, scared shitless. ‘That family, what are they cooking? Is it people? No, it’s hamburgers.’ But in this drug-induced meditational moment, I’m thinking, ‘I can’t believe I’m going to leave this girl and move back to North Carolina to fuck off with my friends.’” By the

2006; Will Ferrell and his partner Adam McKay’s production company scooped it up. “I had never met anyone famous before,” McBride remembers. “One day you’re a fan watching their movies, and then suddenly, they’re asking you what other shit you want to do. It was nuts.”

Seth Rogen loved *Foot Fist*, and when he finally met McBride, he was nothing like Rogen imagined: “I was expecting a dude with a camouflage vest and a shotgun,” Rogen says, “but he was wearing glasses, he was shy, and he was kind of a movie nerd.”

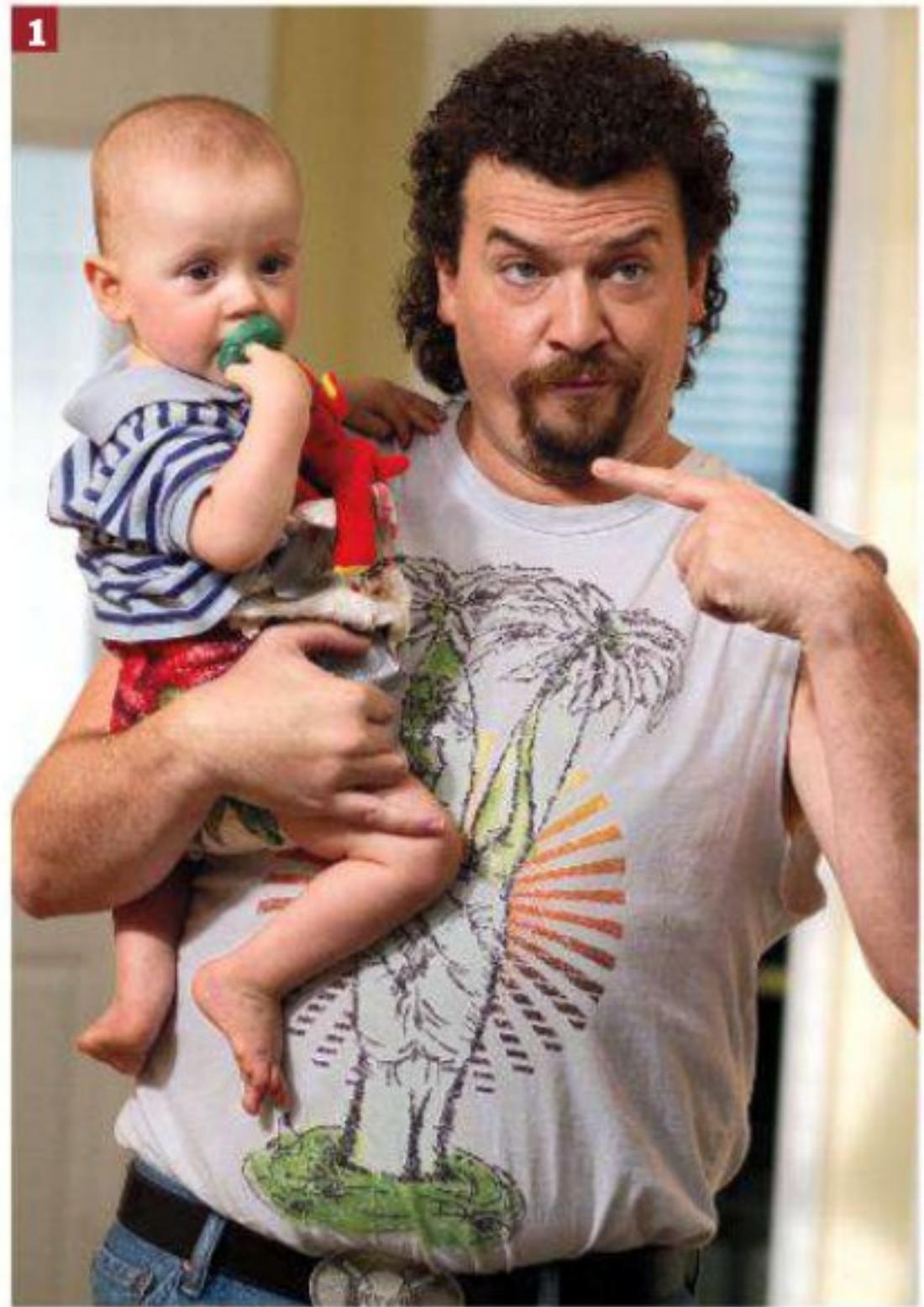
Soon, McBride was everywhere, appearing in movies ranging from *Tropic Thunder* to *Up in the Air*. “He’s one of the funniest improvisers ever,” says Rogen, who worked with McBride in *Pineapple Express*. “Danny’s fun to write for. He has an epic nature to his speech, something Patton-esque, even though the characters he plays are usually so stupid and reprehensible.”

McBride’s baffled as to why everyone is convinced that he’s anything like these loser-maniacs he’s constantly playing. “Maybe it’s a compliment because it’s so believable that people think it can’t be a performance,” he says. “But at the end of the day, we’re getting paid money to fuckin’ play make-pretend.” He does, however, have his own moments of blinkered idiocy, like the time he traveled all the way to South Korea and decided to eat at an Outback Steakhouse.

McBride’s mother, Kathy, says that sometimes co-workers will bring up the language in her son’s work – “But I don’t get embarrassed, because I know that’s not Danny. But my mom is now 86, so I don’t like for her to see some of those parts.” When *Eastbound & Down* premiered, Grandma was living in a Florida retirement community; she got some friends to watch with her. Afterward, Kathy reports, “none of them really talked to her anymore.”

Last year, McBride hit a bump when his stoner swords-and-sorcery comedy, *Your Highness*, was a critical and commercial flop. It’s probably the only movie McBride will ever make where he wears a Minotaur penis around his neck. “The movie didn’t work,” he concedes. “That’s the risk you take when you push the levels of decency and good taste. It may appear that we lost, but honestly, we didn’t lose – the movie is exactly what we set out to do.”

Kenny Powers may be ruled by the standards of success he adopted when he was a teenager; McBride has been more flexible, but has still achieved his dream. As a kid, he’d “wrangle whomever I could from the school bus,” and end up making a war movie in his backyard with the quarterback from the football team and a drum major. Now, McBride gets millions of dollars to make demented comedies, and he has all the trappings of success he ever desired. “I have all the pay cable channels,” McBride says, “so my 16-year-old self would be happy with that.” He smiles – a smart man who knows exactly when to play dumb. 



EVEN THE LOSERS

McBride, who has perfected the art of playing delusional rednecks, returns this month on *Eastbound & Down* (1). With his mom, Kathy (2), and his wife, Gia, in Los Angeles (3).

that he would zoom in and pull back on photographs for documentaries like *Dogtown and Z-Boys*, or on VH1’s *Behind the Music*. “To me, it was like I had reached the goal,” he recalls. Then McBride got a call from Green, who was shooting the indie romance *All the Real Girls*. “This actor bailed on the movie,” Green says. “I didn’t have a backup, so I just called the funniest guy I knew.” McBride quit his job and headed to North Carolina. Although he acquitted himself well in the film, the role didn’t lead to any more work, or even headshots.

In the battle of Danny McBride versus Los Angeles, L.A. was winning. “It’s a tough city for a guy with \$15 in his pocket, driving around in a 1990 Hyundai Elantra,” McBride says. Around 2002, he decided he

time they got to North Carolina, he had decided to head back to California with Ruiz, whom he would eventually marry.

Still broke, McBride got work as a substitute teacher, covering everything from earth science to German. “This is how I taught a German class,” McBride says. “I put in a tape of *Cops*, and said, ‘You guys don’t fuck with me, and I won’t fuck with you. I’m going to read, and you guys are going to watch the legal system at work.’” Years later, memories of his teaching days would fuel Kenny Powers’ overly aggressive career as a phys-ed teacher.

Then McBride did another favor for a college friend: When Hill wanted to direct a feature, McBride co-wrote *The Foot Fist Way* with him and starred in it as a delusional tae kwon do instructor whose life falls apart after his wife gives her boss a hand job. It became a Sundance hit in

GAVIN EDWARDS wrote about the return of *Beavis and Butt-Head* in RS 1143.

THE PRINCE of DRAGONS

How did Christopher Paolini, a home-schooled fantasy geek from the middle of nowhere, become one of the world's bestselling authors? By Amanda Fortini

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRYCE DUFFY

Paolini near his Montana home. *Inheritance*, his epic fantasy series, has sold more than 33 million copies.



■ DRAGON PRINCE

CHRISTOPHER PAOLINI, THE 28-YEAR-OLD AUTHOR of the bestselling *Inheritance* series, still lives at home with his parents and his younger sister. The family residence, a swanky cabin, is located in a remote corner of southwestern Montana known as Paradise Valley. It's an enormous, austere home, with plenty of private space for everyone – especially Christopher, who has his own wing. * "This is the lair," Paolini announces proudly, as we enter the two-room suite where he sleeps and works. "Nice place to write, huh?" he says, with a sweep of his hand, palm open, like a game-show host highlighting prizes.

The rooms are scrupulously neat and filled with dragons: There is a dragon coffee table, a dragon side table, a dragon sconce, a dragon shelf, a dragon clock, a dragon mirror, a dragon lamp, a dragon letter holder, a dragon bench and a dragon head mounted outside the door – a fitting design scheme for an author who made his name writing books about a boy named Eragon, who seals his fate as a "Dragon Rider" when he finds a bright-blue egg that hatches a dragon. "I could have gotten more," Paolini says, "but I decided that was enough dragons for one place."

There are also swords, lots of swords. "I want to show you this," he says, lifting up an impressive three-and-a-half-foot broadsword in a black leather sheath. "I bought this as a treat for finishing the book," he says, referring to *Inheritance*, the fourth and final installment in his epic cycle. The novels recount the adventures of Eragon and his dragon companion, Saphira, with whom he shares a telepathic connection, as they zoom around consorting with elves and dwarves and battling various dark forces dispatched by the evil King Galbatorix. ("I write schmaltz with dragons," says Paolini about his work.) *Inheritance*, which was published in November, sold 489,500 copies its first day out – more than any other release in 2011.

Impressive as that statistic sounds, it's akin to just another billion burgers on a McDonald's sign. *Eragon*, Paolini's first work of fantasy, published when he was only 19 years old, debuted at number three on the *New York Times* bestseller list, then spent 21 weeks at number one. His four books have collectively sold more than 33 million copies worldwide. Given Paolini's geographic isolation, the rudimentary nature of his plots and, of course, his startling youth, this is a powerfully bizarre achievement. But it is not his alone. About a decade ago, the Paolinis made the rather unconventional decision to make their teenage son's fantasy novel the family business. Paolini repeatedly emphasizes that he's spearheading a team effort, with Mom fielding fan mail, Dad turning "the finan-

cial wheels," sister acting as girl Friday, and all four editing. Together they have forged a prodigious empire: the *Inheritance* series is a multimillion-dollar mom and pop – and brother and sister – business run by a clan of introverts living on the prairie. "If it weren't for the support of my parents and sister," Paolini says, "none of this would've been possible for me."

Paolini wears small, round, wire-rimmed spectacles that have earned him endless comparisons to Harry Potter. His dark-brown hair, meticulously combed into place, appears never to move. He has his own tidy uniform of sorts: an ironed button-down shirt securely tucked into belted dark-wash jeans. He's endearingly nerdy – not in the affected, pretentious, nouveau-hipster sense, à la Wes Anderson, but rather in the traditional, unintentional, pale-as-your-inner-thigh sense, à la the kid who plays *Dungeons & Dragons* or *Magic: The Gathering*.

"Every fantasy author deserves a good sword, and this is mine," Paolini says. Slowly, dramatically, he removes the weapon from its scabbard. It makes a loud scraping noise on its way out. "This is the real deal," he says, waving the blade, made of high-carbon Damascus steel and etched with an elaborate calligraphic design, in front of him. "I found the only custom sword store in all of New York City," he continues, slicing the air. "It fits me and my body perfectly. I hope never to have a duel, but if I do, I would trust my life to this sword."

**"I HOPE NEVER
TO HAVE A DUEL,
BUT IF I DO,
I WOULD TRUST
MY LIFE TO
THIS SWORD."**

PLEASE REMOVE YOUR shoes," says Paolini's 26-year-old sister, Angela, with dramatic singsong inflection, as she meets me in a foyer that doubles as a home gym. Paolini's mother, Talita, a birdlike woman with a girlish voice and a sweet manner, makes a fluttery motion with her hand to indicate, "Oh, forget it, she can leave them on." But Angela, who is tough and no-nonsense, and acts as her brother's protector, insists: "We don't wear them in the house."

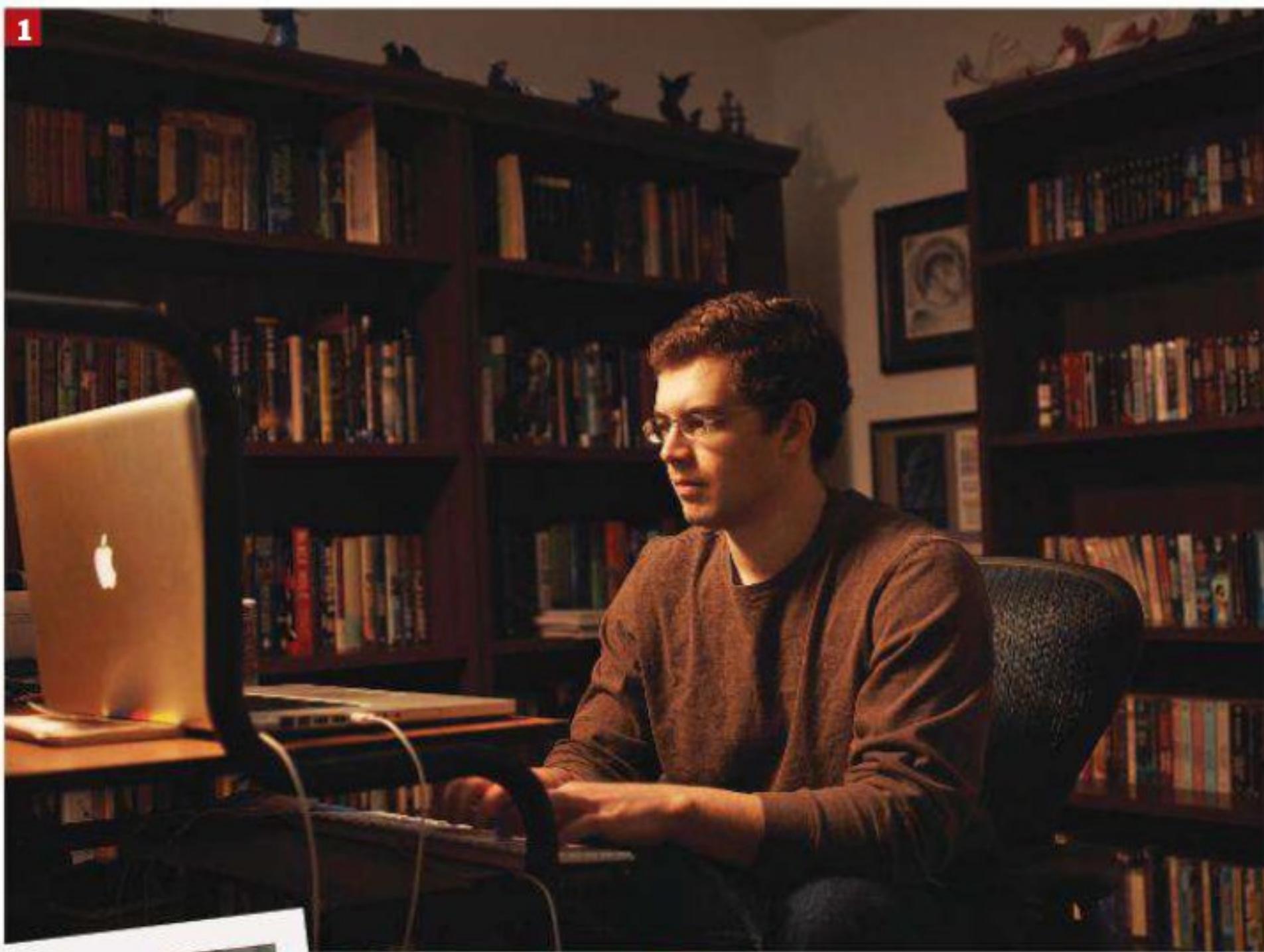
According to Paolini, he and Angela, a petite woman with intelligent dark eyes and a fantastic nest of dark, springy curls, have their own near-telepathic bond, not unlike Eragon and his dragon. Angela is the inspiration for one of Paolini's fictional characters, the quirky, feisty Angela the Herbalist, who plays a pivotal narrative role by telling Eragon his fortune, and is the most captivating character in the books. In one passage from *Inheritance*, Paolini writes that Angela the Herbalist's expression is "languid and insolent"; the description applies to the real Angela as well. She gives the discomfiting impression that she's mocking you, teasing you, flirting with you and sizing you up all at once.

Paolini and the female half of his family gather, barefoot, in an airy main room with high, slanted ceilings. We all settle into a quartet of ergonomic leather chairs. Paolini's father, Kenneth – olive-skinned, compact, a human Tesla coil of intensity – is preparing to grill some hormone-free burgers. Picture windows offer a view of dry, maize-colored grass rippling in the wind, and, in the distance, the blue-tinged Absaroka mountains. A set of djembe drums rests against one wall. "Who plays the drums?" I ask. "Oh, we all do," Paolini says with a shrug, as though this is the most natural thing in the world.

Later, while we eat, Paolini tells me that every evening during dinner the family watches a movie together. The night before my visit, it was the Fellini film *Il Bidone*. "Tonight we'll probably watch *Transformers: Dark Side of the Moon*," Paolini says. "We watch anything we want to."

If you know something about where Christopher Paolini lives, and something about his family, his novels become less fantastical than they might at first seem. "People think I'm inventing a lot of the stuff, and I do," he says, "but a lot of it is based on personal experience." The books are set in a sort of medievalized version of Montana, as strange and psychedelic a natural environment as exists anywhere. In Yellowstone Park, a few miles away from his home, there are thermal geysers from which steaming water thunders out of the earth, sulfurous green pools, bubbling mud pots and colorful bacterial mats. Wall-shuddering gales blow for weeks at a time and are especially pronounced in Paradise Valley. The intensity of the elements creates a timeless at-

1



3

Mr. Fantasy

(1) Paolini in his home office. "I write schmaltz with dragons," he says. (2) As a teen, he would dress up and hawk his self-published novel, *Eragon*. (3) With his sister, Angela.

2



mosphere, one very much like "the harsh, beautiful land" of Alegësia, the imaginary world of the series. As Paolini puts it, "Most of my descriptions of nature, the way ice looks, or the way the trees look - it's all from here."

Paolini has lived in Montana since he was three. His parents moved here as members of the Church Universal and Triumphant, also known as CUT, a New Age survivalist cult. CUT was as steeped in faux-medieval symbolism - gnomes, sylphs and fairies - as any fantasy book or video game. The group's leader, Elizabeth Clare Prophet, or "Guru Ma," channeled the mystical teachings of the "Ascended Masters," a pantheon of enlightened beings ranging from Jesus to Maria Montessori. One of CUT's missions was to revive the quest for the Holy Grail; Prophet imagined herself as Queen Guinevere, and other church figures as Lancelot, King Arthur and Sir Galahad. In the mid-Eighties, Prophet began warning of an impending apocalypse. She ordered her followers to leave "Camelot," the group's headquarters in the Santa Monica Mountains, and relocate to Montana, where members were building under-

ground bomb shelters. The Paolinis joined the exodus but soon grew disenchanted with the group, leaving in 1987 because they refused, in their words, "to sacrifice our family to CUT and its mission."

Paolini downplays his parents' decade-long membership in CUT, saying that it didn't really affect him, because they left when he was just a boy. This seems unlikely, given that CUT haunted his family for years. In 1989, when Prophet's husband and another member of the group were arrested for buying firearms illegally, Kenneth gave an incriminating interview to the local paper, saying that Prophet and her henchmen had been stockpiling weapons. The story blew up. The Paolinis did scores of interviews, and Kenneth appeared on *Oprah*. In 1999, when Paolini was 15 years old, his parents self-published an account of their CUT experience, *400 Years of Imaginary Friends*. "We discovered that CUT was the culmination of centuries of hoaxes," they write, "that it was built on myth and sold as reality."

The years Paolini's parents spent immersed in CUT's Led Zeppelin theology seem to have penetrated their son's consciousness. One might even argue that his fascination with mythical beings simply took a more socially acceptable form.

But perhaps the most obvious effect on his writing is an aversion to groupthink. One of the major preoccupations of the *Inheritance* series is that Eragon remain independent of mind, free of allegiance to any authority, answering to his conscience alone. "I definitely have an appreciation of how easy it is for people to end up getting led astray if you let other people make decisions for you," he says, "and part of that certainly comes from family experience."

O

N A BRIGHT FALL AFTERNOON, I meet Paolini for lunch at a bar in Livingston, Montana. He has been in the public eye for almost a decade now, and interviewing him can be an opaque affair. He lights up when the topic is fantasy literature; ask him about almost anything else, though, and he grows visibly bored and distracted. Inquire about his personal life - his religious beliefs, or whether he has a significant other - and the curtain comes down. "I'd rather not say," he'll answer, like a seasoned politician.

But he loves telling his own origin myth. He led an isolated childhood. Even after leaving CUT, his parents remained apart from mainstream life. Kenneth earned a modest living doing odd jobs like Rolfining (a form of massage therapy). For a time, the family lived in an airplane hangar, then in a cabin prone to leaks and heated by a 55-gallon barrel stove. Both children were home-schooled. Christopher devoured all the fantasy books at the tiny Livingston library, until he felt "as if I'd read all the fantasy stories out there." Restless, curious and free of the confines of conventional schooling, he became the sort of kid who teaches himself to make chain mail. "I built two forges when I was in my teens," he says. "I was just really, really into metalworking and making stuff."

When he graduated at 15 from the American School, an accredited distance-learning institution, his parents felt he was too young to go to college. He didn't have a driver's license, a job or much to do. He began digging a crater in his backyard - "I decided I wanted to make an underground lair," he says. "You know, like a Hobbit hole" - but in two weeks, he'd tunneled as far as the arid Montana earth would allow, and he was in need of a new diversion. Driven by typical adolescent yearning, at once vague and grandiose, he decided to write a book. "I was reading about Renaissance men and women in their early twenties," he says, "and they'd done all this incredible stuff - spoke four languages, played the violin. So I was looking for something big to do."

He decided to plot a trilogy because "all fantasy stories are trilogies, right?" A year later, having completed a draft of the first book, he couldn't let it go. "I'm the sort of person that starts digging a hole and doesn't stop until it's fin-

[Cont. on 70]



George
Dad
25

ROLLING STONE

What happens when a cop falls in love with the radicals he's spying on? Mark Kennedy found out the hard way
BY DAVID KUSHNER



Mark Kennedy as a rookie cop in 1990 (opposite page) - and as the activist known as Flash in 2004.

M

A R K

Stone watched in alarm as his girlfriend snapped a black bicycle lock around her throat, securing herself to a giant yellow dump truck. "I don't think this is a good idea," Stone told her. It was just after dawn near Kárahnjúkar, deep in the Icelandic tundra. Stone and his girlfriend, along with a dozen other activists, had spent the past two weeks camped out in the remote wilderness, one of the last unspoiled areas in all of Europe. Their goal was as clear as it was dangerous: to shut down construction of a 650-foot dam being built to provide power to Alcoa, the American-based aluminum giant.

A rugged 36-year-old with tattoos snaking up his arms, Stone was considered something of a superhero in the small, insular world of radical eco-fighters. He had scaled power plants in England, driven getaway cars at environmental demonstrations, and taken part in underground meetings and violent protests in 15 countries, including the United States. Now, as his fellow activists cuffed themselves to the truck's fender, he found himself in an uncharacteristic

tivist with fiery red hair. "You could have gotten killed!" he said, embracing her. "There's no point dying for this."

His concern for his girlfriend was real. But almost everything else about Mark Stone was a lie. His real name was Mark Kennedy, and he was a British undercover cop with a wife and two kids back in Ireland. Recruited by the National Public Order Intelligence Unit, a shadowy wing of Scotland Yard, Kennedy was the top mole of Operation Pegasus, a clandestine, multimillion-dollar mission to "infiltrate extreme left-wing groups."

Like a hippie James Bond, Kennedy excelled at his part. He had transformed himself from a lowly London bobby to an international eco-spy: growing his hair long, going vegan, learning guitar, and insinuating himself into a radical, and sometimes militant, network of activist and anarchist groups. But he made one mistake: falling in love with the movement he was assigned to shut down. After years of living undercover as a green warrior, he could no longer separate his roles as a spy and a protester. "The only difference between Mark Stone and Mark Kennedy," he says now, "is that Mark Kennedy was a cop."

MARK KENNEDY GREW UP IN the suburbs of London, the clean-cut son of a cop. "Being a policeman was a way of life for the family," says his father, John, a decorated traffic officer. "We had a responsibility to society that we had to uphold." Mark's eventual spot on the force may have seemed preordained, but almost from the start he faced a host of

spent nights moshing at punk shows and weekends rock climbing across Europe. Then, in 1997, he volunteered for Operation Crackdown, a campaign designed to take drug dealers off the streets. Being an undercover narcotics officer fed his fix for excitement. It required the finesse of an actor and the instincts of a fighter pilot. "You have to be aware of the environment you're going into and the dangers," Kennedy says, "and still act like someone who is desperate for a rock of crack."

Kennedy proved an expert bullshit artist. In 2000, he was one of the first recruits for a bigger and more mysterious operation: spying on left-wing "extremists" for the newly established National Public Order Intelligence Unit. The NPOIU had been created in response to a rash of animal-liberation and environmental protests, some of which had turned violent. In the days before September 11th, such home-grown activists were being treated in the U.S. and England as a threat nearly as serious as radical Islamic groups. "There was a need to ascertain what these people were going to do," says a former NPOIU official who asked not to be identified. "Are they going to take us back to the Stone Age?"

Almost entirely unaccountable to the public, the NPOIU revived the kind of covert operations against radical groups that had resulted in widespread police abuses during the 1960s. "It's the paranoid style of policing we seem to have imported from the United States," says British activist George Monbiot, a columnist for *The Guardian*. "The Bush-era attitudes crept into our government. It's a complete failure to recognize that peaceful protest

is not just legitimate but necessary, if democracy is to be sustained."

But such issues never concerned Mark Kennedy. He took it as an honor to be chosen, and learned everything he could about what his fellow cops called the "hairies" and "tree-huggers." He learned to eat and talk like a vegetarian. When he attended a protest against the Iraq War, he found it "very liberal and fluffy." For his final indoctrination, the NPOIU dispatched him to an abandoned air base that had been transformed into an anarchist squat, populated by cops posing as radicals. There, Kennedy spent five days infiltrating the mock activists and gathering intelligence on their activities. He was also warned to be wary of the left's most dangerous weapon: sex. "Imagine hippie culture of the Sixties," his recruiter told him. "It's very much free love, but don't engage in sexual activity with these people. You never know who they've been with."

Kennedy rose quickly through the ranks, busting purse snatchers and burglars, and playing on the police rugby team in London. While responding to a robbery at a clothing store, he met a conservative Irish Catholic girl who worked there, Edel, whom he married and eventually had children with. But he quickly grew bored with his job, and began seeking edgier adventures of his own. A Dead Kennedys fan, he

KENNEDY INFILTRATED THE GROUP BY POSING AS A DRUG SMUGGLER. "HE WAS QUITE MACHO," RECALLS ONE ACTIVIST. "HE HAD A BIG EGO."

position: wondering if his comrades were going too far.

The truck's driver, undeterred by the scruffy punks attached to his rig, revved his engine, slipped the clutch and inched forward — a move almost certain to snap the neck of Stone's girlfriend. Horrified, Stone popped the truck's hood and slashed frantically at the engine's cables, to no avail. Clawing desperately, he felt the distributor cap in his grip and pulled hard. The truck ground to a halt.

As security guards charged forward, Stone pushed through the melee to find his girlfriend, a fair-skinned Welsh ac-

physical challenges. At age two, he cut his ocular tendon on a staple while playing in a cardboard box, leaving him with a lazy eye. He also had a pronounced stammer. Nevertheless, at 20, he decided to follow in his father's footsteps and enroll in the police academy. "You'll never be rich," his dad warned him, "but you'll be proud of what you've done."

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Contributing editor DAVID KUSHNER's book "Jacked: The Outlaw Story of Grand Theft Auto" will be published in April.



drug dealer and van courier who had amassed money smuggling heroin in Pakistan, which he knew well from a mountaineering trip. He would also highlight his skills as a climber, someone who could swiftly scale power plants and hang protest banners whenever needed. When he had to fill out the police form for his fake passport and driver's license, he put down the first alias that came to mind: Mark, so he could respond naturally to his first name, and Stone, because it was easy to remember.

WHEN ACTIVISTS AT THE Sumac Centre, a bustling clubhouse for protesters in Nottingham, first set eyes on Mark Stone in 2001, he didn't look anything like the cop he'd left behind. He sported dark hair down past his shoulders, a scraggly goatee, silver hoop earrings and tattoos poking out from under his T-shirt, blending right in with the neo-hippies cooking curry lentils in the communal kitchen and playing Sex Pistols songs on guitars in the unkempt courtyard. "He just seemed like a regular guy," recalls one activist.

But that didn't mean they were quick to accept him. As a primary hub for the animal-liberation and environmental

movements, the Sumac Centre had long been subject to raids, and newcomers were treated warily. "We knew the history of how police had been infiltrating groups since the Black Panthers," says Dan Glass, a veteran activist. "We were always on the lookout." Winning their trust wouldn't be easy. "You can't just turn up and say, 'Hi, I'm going to join your revolution' – they'll turn away from you," says the former NPOIU official. "What you need to do is go in there and become known."

Unlike previous infiltrators, Kennedy had the time – and the state-sponsored bankroll – to slowly ingratiate himself. The unit set up Kennedy with a house, identification papers, a gray Ford Escort van and a bank account in Stone's name. He was assigned a full-time cover officer, an avuncular older cop who would trail him whenever he went on the road and provide him with an out if things got too hot. Several times a day, Kennedy was expected to check in and pass on whatever intelligence he had acquired. When anyone was within earshot of his calls, Kennedy called the older cop Uncle.

Yet despite all of the precautions, Kennedy felt like a schoolboy sent to India. Everything was new and weird, from the gritty town of Nottingham – painfully far from

his wife and kids back in Ireland – to the vegan beer in his mug. Even the protesters themselves defied his imagination. They didn't seem like the dippy freaks the older cops joked about: There were professors and scientists, some of them from families much like his own. Though he didn't question the job he had to do, he came to see them as "highly intelligent people who were adopting a course of action and a lifestyle because of what they believed in."

Through trial and error, Kennedy eventually hit on the best way to insinuate himself with the activists: by making Mark Stone larger than life. He wore wraparound shades and boasted about

smuggling smack in Pakistan, the profits from which he was now going to devote to social action. "He was quite macho," recalls Glass. "He had a big ego. It's a dick extension – to be the best protester, have the most fun, be the most confrontational."

The activists at the Sumac Centre soon had a nickname for him: Flash.

But the more tales Mark Stone spun, the more Mark Kennedy had to keep track of his elaborate web of lies – or risk losing the relationships he was building. "Unlike the drug dealers," he recalls, "the activists actually wanted to be Mark Stone's friends."

The activist lifestyle was even more promiscuous than Kennedy had been warned about. "It wasn't unusual to be sleeping with four or five different people," he says. Parties were weekend-long affairs, fueled by Ecstasy and Special K. The drugs were more than recreational. "If people needed to hire a minibus to go on an action," Kennedy says, "sometimes that money came from the profits of selling Ecstasy." Often the parties were themed: an S&M ball for the holidays, complete with a makeshift dungeon for anyone who wanted a spanking, and a "Queer Option" party, at which everyone cross-dressed. There was always a bowl of vegan condoms on the bar – made without the milk proteins used in some latex. "I'd never seen anything like this before," says Kennedy. To keep himself from crossing any lines, he developed a strategy for avoiding temptation: being a DJ. "If you're hanging around your decks, you can be aloof," he says. "You don't have to engage in drinking and stuff like that."

After spending months with the activists, Kennedy was in – a trusted eco-warrior who could be counted on to play an essential role. With his roomy van, his credit cards for gas and his seemingly uncanny skill at evading the police, Stone became the underground movement's go-to chauffeur, shuttling people and supplies

to demonstrations. "He was someone who was useful, and he knew how to drive," says Jerry Monroe, an alias for a dreadlocked activist who met Stone early on.

Stone's badass reputation extended to his climbing. Many of the group's demonstrations involved hanging protest banners from high places, and few could scale trees and towers as confidently as Stone. One day, he and Monroe went to Oxfordshire to hang a "climate crimes" banner at a massive power station. Monroe took one look at the 150-foot tower they had to climb and immediately balked. But Stone was a patient guide, teaching him how to fix his harness and knot his rope. It would be one of many such missions together. "I climbed with him," recalls Monroe, "and there's a trust you build."

Throughout the planning of each protest, Kennedy would sneak off to call Uncle with information about the group's operation. He felt proud of his work, telling himself that he was protecting the activists by providing details to his superiors that would ensure peaceful demonstrations. "I was never targeting anybody," he says. "As I understood it, I was gathering

was just another masked face in the crowd of protesters pushing against them.

As the march in Dublin grew into the thousands, the protesters quickly gained the upper hand. Kennedy jostled to the front of the pack. The pressure of bodies swelled until he and a mass of shouting protesters tumbled through the line of cops in riot gear. The police blasted back with water cannons and batons. Drenched and battered, Kennedy heard an awful snap and crumpled to the ground. "I thought my knee was broken," he recalls. As a cop closed in over him, swinging his baton, Kennedy heard another sickening crack.

It wasn't his own arm that was breaking. A fellow protester had thrust himself in front of the cop, taking the blow for Kennedy. As he helped his injured friend, Kennedy's mind swirled with anger and confusion. The whole point of his job, he thought, was to *prevent* violence like this from happening. Now he and his buddy could barely limp away. What good was his work if the cops were going to respond with excessive force, instead of weeding out the violent protesters? "I was passing

and the way that we loved each other - I've never experienced that in any relationship, ever," Kennedy says.

When Kennedy would return to Ireland every few weeks to spend time with his wife and children, his double life became even more strained. Though Edel knew he was doing some kind of undercover work, he was no longer the straight-arrow, meat-eating cop she had known before. Much to the amazement of his family, Kennedy was now a full-time vegetarian, eating produce he had grown in his yard.

His resolve was tried further in 2006, during a protest at the Drax coal-fired power plant, the largest source of carbon emissions in England. With its dozen 350-foot cooling towers spewing planet-warming pollution into the atmosphere, Drax had become an iconic symbol of the climate crisis. Now, after a year of meticulous planning, activists were preparing their most ambitious action yet: to shut down the entire plant.

On a cloudy day that August, 600 people flooded the streets outside the plant, banging on drums and pans, dressed like clowns and Merry Pranksters. Far off over

the plowed fields, along the plant's perimeter fence, Kennedy and others had buried cutting equipment at precise locations. The goal was to break off from the drum-banging legions, grab their tools, cut through the fence, then slip in and chain themselves to the plant's equipment, forcing a shutdown. As Kennedy had recently seen in Iceland, such an action could easily go wrong.

Hoping his intelligence would forewarn the authorities and prevent unnecessary violence, he had sent Uncle copies of the group's maps and plans.

When the activists cut through the fence, they were immediately greeted by police - but not in the way Kennedy had expected. Without any provocation, the cops assaulted the protesters with tear gas. Kennedy watched in horror as an officer swung his baton, smashing the legs of a young female activist who was crawling through a hole in the fence. "Calm down!" Kennedy shouted. "You're not achieving anything here!"

When the cop ignored him, Kennedy dived in after her. A half-dozen officers immediately began kicking and punching him. In a white-hot crack, a baton struck his skull. Kennedy covered his head, only to have another blow crush his left hand. As he lay bleeding on the ground, he felt someone stomp on his back and heard something crunch.

The cops dragged Kennedy to a police van, where protesters were being herded in handcuffs. A crowd of curious onlookers had gathered to watch the action, and Kennedy wanted them to see what the police had wrought. Battered and bruised, he shouted, "This is the face of peaceful

IN A WHITE-HOT CRACK, A BATON STRUCK HIS SKULL. AS HE LAY ON THE GROUND BLEEDING, ANOTHER BLOW CRUSHED HIS LEFT HAND.

intelligence so that things could be appropriately policed." Kennedy wasn't told where or how his intelligence was being used, but when he saw the cops arrive at a protest as if on cue, he knew exactly whose side he was on. "I was always a police officer," he says. "I always did my job and I always knew my role."

THE ONLY TOOK ONE CRACK OF A POLICE baton for Kennedy to begin calling that role into question. By May 2004, he had infiltrated the remnants of the Wombles, a group of anarchists who dressed like a gang out of *A Clockwork Orange*, in white overalls and protective padding. That month, the group was joining thousands of activists in Dublin to protest the European Union summit, and Kennedy was ferrying crash helmets and masks to the event.

Kennedy never went anywhere without the consent of the NPOIU, as well as government officials in the countries he was visiting. While on the road, he was trailed by Uncle, along with at least one other cover officer. Despite the chain of approval, however, Kennedy received no preferential treatment at the protests: To protect his identity, local cops weren't informed of his presence. As far as they knew, Mark Stone

intelligence back about what was going to take place so that incidents like that didn't occur," Kennedy says.

His allegiances were tested even further during a recreational climbing trip to England's Lake District, where he and his fellow activists camped out, drinking red wine late into the night. Kennedy's hair was longer now, and he had a few more tattoos. After spending years with the activists, he had grown sympathetic to their cause - and their women. Despite being ordered not to have sex with the activists, Kennedy's willpower was wearing down. He had already been seduced by a sultry blond protester at a party, a moment of weakness he rationalized as being good for his job. "She was hitting on me," he says, "and I just felt that to complain and be weird about it would raise suspicions." So he slept with her instead.

Now, during an outing at a local pub, Kennedy couldn't keep his eyes off a young Welsh graduate student he calls Megan. The two had been scoping each other out for months; Megan had charmed Kennedy with her haunting rendition of Welsh folk songs. The two soon became inseparable - sleeping together, cooking, climbing, attending protests and a Pixies show. "The way that we took care of each other

protest!" It didn't matter if the face was Mark Kennedy's or Mark Stone's. The blood flowing down it was his.

The thrashing left Kennedy with a broken finger and a prolapsed disc. It also shattered his faith in his job: What was the point of feeding intelligence to the cops about peaceful protests if people were still getting beaten? When Uncle called and demanded to meet with him after Drax, Kennedy refused to leave the protesters. "You've completely fucked it up!" he seethed, texting Uncle photos of his battered face. "I am going to stay here for the time being, where people are actually going to take care of me."

To Kennedy's shock, the NPOIU initiated an investigation into whether he had assaulted the officers at Drax him-



self. Ordered home for three months while the investigation dragged on, Kennedy found himself at age 37 with no other job prospects. Worse, the family life he once enjoyed was falling apart. His wife had grown wise to Kennedy's infidelity, and the two were only together for the kids. But Kennedy had been lying to Megan too — after all, she had fallen in love with Mark Stone, the fearless protester, not Mark Kennedy, the ambivalent cop whose life was now unraveling. He felt trapped in his role as a spy. "I couldn't see a positive way out of it that was not going to destroy everything," he says.

Finally, cleared by the Drax investigation, Kennedy was allowed to return to his life as Stone. As he left, his dad offered him a piece of advice. "Watch your back," the retired cop told him. "Because as soon as you're no longer an asset, you're yesterday's man."

BY THAT POINT, BRITAIN'S battle against environmental protesters had become a worldwide war — and the Bush administration was leading the assault. In May 2005, the FBI's top official in charge of domestic terrorism told a Senate committee that "the number-one domestic terrorism threat is the eco-terrorist, animal-rights movement." According to the FBI, eco-terrorist groups had been responsible for 1,200 attacks and more than \$100 million in damages.

The administration, looking for a way to extend its War on Terror, responded with tough new laws and high-

profile arrests. President Bush signed the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act into law, granting the Justice Department expansive authority to arrest, prosecute and convict eco-terrorists. Operation Backfire, an FBI investigation into animal-rights and environmental activists, led to a series of indictments across the United States. Activists dubbed the crackdown the "Green Scare." Government documents uncovered by the ACLU revealed that the FBI was "expanding the definition of 'domestic terrorism' to include citizens and groups that participate in lawful protests or civil disobedience." Among the groups subjected to federal surveillance were Greenpeace and a "Vegan Community Project," run by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals at the University of Indiana.

With the U.S. trumping up the threat of left-wing extremists, governments around

the world joined the fight — and Britain, which had become the Bush administration's closest ally in the War on Terror, dispatched Kennedy on dozens of globe-trotting missions to provide intelligence for foreign officials. The road trips were not only a welcome break from the lies he was feeding the activists he had come to admire back in England, they were also a way to advance his career. He infiltrated a militant squat in Copenhagen, where activists fighting eviction hurled Molotov cocktails and rioted, and crashed underground meetings in Berlin, where anarchists plotted to derail trains delivering nuclear waste. In 2008, with the approval of

the U.S. government, Kennedy traveled to New York to spy on a secret meeting of European and American anti-capitalists, including members of the Earth Liberation Front and student activists from Stanford University, who were planning to disrupt the upcoming Republican and Democratic conventions.

Posing as Stone, Kennedy shared his logistical expertise with the assembled activists, not far from where the Occupy movement would later take off. Based on what he saw in New York, though, he didn't see what all the fuss was about. "It was a bit of a pointless meeting," he says. He told his superiors that the group, who struck him as young and naive, didn't seem like much of a threat. A French activist

suspected of advocating armed revolution was followed as a result of his spying, but no arrests were made.

That didn't stop his superiors from praising Kennedy. He received a special commendation from the FBI for his work, and his cover officer told him some of his intelligence on British activists had reached the desk of Prime Minister Tony Blair. "It was their way of letting me know that I was doing the right thing," Kennedy says.

NIN THE SPRING OF 2009, ENVIRONMENTAL activists invited Mark Stone to join their biggest and most brazen action to date: shutting down one of Britain's largest power plants, Ratcliffe-on-Soar, which pumps 150,000 tons of carbon into the atmosphere every week. Kennedy says he was recruited by a man who worked for Greenpeace UK.

(The group says the man, if he did work for Greenpeace, acted on his own accord.)

Over coffee at a train station, the man showed Kennedy a file of maps and photographs, explaining exactly how activists planned to shut down the power plant. At three in the morning, he said, a fleet of vehicles filled with designated teams of protesters would descend on the site. A cutting team would snap the padlocks on the gates, enabling another team to break into the plant and chain themselves to the coal conveyor belts. A climbing team would meanwhile scale the plant's smokestacks, streaming live video to show the world Ratcliffe's high levels of emissions. Kennedy agreed to rent and drive a lorry, for which the Greenpeace official slipped him £500 in an envelope.

But when Kennedy reported the intelligence back to his superiors, they came up with a plan of their own: to make the largest pre-emptive arrest of environmental protesters in history, and charge the activists with conspiracy. Kennedy thought the plan was not only absurd, but unjust. A conspiracy requires people to agree on a plan – but the protesters hadn't agreed on anything, and there was no telling if they ever would. What's more, Kennedy felt sickened by the reckless squandering of tax dollars on undercover operations. Cover officers were being provided with BMWs and Audis, and living in luxury apartments in London. The more the NPOIU could justify its existence with high-profile arrests, the better – and Ratcliffe-on-Soar offered the biggest payoff yet. "Management felt that this could be good for their career," Kennedy says.

To strengthen the case against the activists, Kennedy was ordered to secretly record the protesters at Ratcliffe. He had

his better judgment, Kennedy urged his girlfriend Megan to steer clear of the protest. "You don't need to be there," he said. "You don't want to risk your future career." She was still in grad school, and there was no reason to jeopardize her job prospects. Much to his relief, she agreed.

On Easter Sunday, Kennedy and 113 protesters gathered at a small brick schoolhouse in Nottingham. Kennedy was greeted by his activist friends, including Monroe, his dreadlocked climbing partner. He could hardly look them in the eyes, knowing what was about to come. But there was no stopping what he had helped set in motion. After a dinner of vegan stew, they were told the objective. "The plan was basically to shut down the Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station," Monroe says. It would start at 3 a.m. that morning. The tactics were extreme but peaceful. "This was planned to be absolutely nonviolent," recalls one protester.

Just after midnight, as the protesters were bedding down for a few hours of rest, the police came crashing into the schoolhouse, arresting everyone in sight. "We realized the building was surrounded," recalls one activist. The cops seemed more amped up than the protesters, who tried to calm the police down by sitting peacefully and singing a popular British standard: "We'll meet again, don't know where, don't know when...." Even the cop leading the arrests couldn't help himself: His face broke into a wide smile. "It was just this beautiful thing," Monroe says.

The seasoned activists knew exactly what the arrests meant: Someone among them was a spy. "I really want to find out who the person is who grassed us up," a friend sitting next to Kennedy told him as the police rounded everyone up. Ken-

trial, he would be forced to come clean about his true identity. But when Kennedy confronted Uncle, he was told that the higher-ups at NPOIU were responsible for the decision. "It's out of my hands," Uncle told him.

Kennedy feared he was being set up. The NPOIU reportedly had at least a dozen other eco-spies in the field. Exposing Mark Stone would not only quell the growing suspicions among protesters, but would also eliminate a mole whom his superiors worried had gone native. Uncle, who tracked Kennedy's every move, surely knew about his affair with Megan. "He must have known," says the former NPOIU official, who insists he would have "gone double-barrel" on Kennedy had he found out at the time.

Then, right before Kennedy was to report to the police station to be booked, the charges against him were suddenly dropped. But the damage was already done. In a pub that night, his fellow protesters confronted Kennedy, their suspicions aroused. "How the fuck did they drop the charge against you?" one asked. "I hired a lorry as well!"

"I don't know," Kennedy said. "Just got lucky, I guess."

But his luck was running out.

ONE NIGHT THAT FALL, A scruffy MC in a gold-sequined sports coat and cowboy hat grabbed the mic on a makeshift stage at a farm in Hertfordshire. A banner depicting two people going down on each other hung on the brick wall behind him. More than 300 protesters – including some of those charged along with Kennedy in the aborted Ratcliffe protest – milled about the stage, shouting and spilling drinks. The occasion was the 69ers Party, a weekend-long bash to honor the 40th birthdays of several prominent eco-warriors – including the guitarist about to join the band, the 69ers, onstage.

"OK, he's a star," announced the MC. "He's a rock & roll star! It's Flash!"

As the crowd cheered wildly, Kennedy bounded onstage, hoisting his guitar over his head. He was followed by the rest of the band, including Megan, who whipped into a sloppy cover of "1969," by the Stooges.

But the party felt bittersweet. As Kennedy took the vocals on "Folsom Prison Blues," he knew it was the last time he would see many of his friends. Just before he hopped onstage, he'd received a call from Uncle. "The operation is over," Uncle told him. "You've got a week to get out." Kennedy wasn't given a reason, but it only confirmed his own theory: that the NPOIU thought he was in too far.

Kennedy returned to the party in a daze, downing beers and unleashing his

IN TEARS, KENNEDY APOLOGIZED TO HIS GIRLFRIEND FOR ALL THE LIES. "I FEEL SORRY FOR YOU," SHE SAID. "YOU WERE A PAWN OF THE STATE."

never worn a wire before, and he knew it would spell the end of Mark Stone if it exposed him in public. "I was really worried that this was going to go to trial," he recalls. "I'd be facing people I'd known for seven years – and who were really good friends – across a witness box." Uncle slipped a \$10,000 spy watch outfitted with a recording chip on Kennedy's wrist, and sent him on his way.

Kennedy could barely sleep or eat, knowing the trap he was setting to capture his friends. "The love and concern that was given to me was overwhelming, and it brought me extremely close to people," he says. "Maybe too close." Against

nedy said nothing. "I just felt so bad, I felt fucking awful," he says. He had fulfilled his duty and even been decorated for it – but at a cost he never expected. "I did my job very well," he says, "but I got to a point in my deployment where it was becoming very hard to do those things against people who really meant a lot to me on a personal level."

As the mass arrests made international headlines, Kennedy got hit with an even bigger blow: Rather than cutting him loose on some legal pretense, prosecutors charged him with conspiracy to inflict criminal damage at Ratcliffe-on-Soar. It made no sense. If there was a



anger in the DJ booth, where he dropped KRS-One's "Sound of Da Police" as a dark inside joke. As he lay in bed with Megan that night, part of him wanted to confess, to tell her everything. But the cop inside him won out again. "I'm feeling, like, really burnt out," he told her. "I need some time away."

Kennedy's double life came to an unceremonious end a week later. Summoned to an anonymous truck stop, he handed over Mark Stone's credit cards, car keys and passport to his superiors. Stone's Facebook and e-mail accounts would soon be erased, and Kennedy was banned from communicating with the activists he had known for years. Just like that, Mark Stone, the man he'd been for seven long years, was dead. "As of then," he says, "I'd vanished."

The life of Mark Kennedy he returned to was just as destroyed. With his undercover career finished, Kennedy met with the personnel department of the Metropolitan Police in London — only to be told there were no jobs available for him. "There's not really much we can offer you," the personnel officer told him. "You have very few skills." Just as his father had once warned him, he had become yesterday's man. After 20 years on the force, he felt he had no choice but to resign. Kennedy signed an agreement to keep the undercover operation secret, and handed in his badge.

His marriage in shambles, he moved into a houseboat in Nottingham and put his climbing experience to use — as

a window washer. Now off the force, he also returned to the only life he knew, as Mark Stone. If he couldn't live in two worlds anymore, then he would choose this one. "I had nowhere else to go," he says. Like a ghost, he continued socializing with the protesters, including Megan, but told them his activist days were over.

The ruse began to unravel in the summer of 2010, when Megan came across his real passport in his glove box during a climbing trip to Italy. "Look, I'm pretty sure you're not a cop," she told him, "but I'm worried why you have a passport with a different name." Kennedy fumbled for an explanation, telling her it was a fake passport from his drug-dealing days in Pakistan. For the first time, she didn't seem convinced by his lies.

Not long afterward, he was back home with his kids when his home phone rang. "Can I speak with Jack?" the man on the other end said, asking for Kennedy's son.

Kennedy recognized the voice as one of the protesters from Nottingham. He felt stunned, wondering how they'd found his unlisted number. "Jack?" he stammered.

"Jack," the man said. "He's 11 years old. Got blond hair."

"I think you've got the wrong number."

"No, I have the right number."

Kennedy hung up the phone, only to hear it ring again. "Look, Mark, we know

what's going on," the man said. "We know who you are, we know what you do. We want you to come over and explain it."

Kennedy caught a late flight to London, and walked into a house where half a dozen of his closest friends from the underground confronted him. Kennedy sank into a couch while they circled him in chairs. They sat before him, reading from clipboards as they clinically recited the details they'd dug up of Kennedy's true identity: the son of a traffic officer, his wife and kids, even his work back when he was a lowly bobby in London. Kennedy had no idea how they found out so much, and couldn't help wondering if someone in the police force had fed them information. "I try not to get into conspiracy theories," he says, "but they said a few things that only the police would know."

When Megan silently entered the room, the sight of her heartbroken face crushed him. In tears, Kennedy apologized for the years of lies and betrayals. He had systematically rattled her out, rattled out everybody, a government-trained liar. "I feel sorry for you," Megan told him, "because you were a pawn at the hands of the state."

As news of Kennedy's seven-year infiltration spread over online forums, activists reacted with anger and fear. Dan Glass, one of the Ratcliffe defendants, felt disgusted over "the ruthlessness the state will go to protect business as usual, which includes the personal relationships he made. For me, that was gut-wrenchingly fascist." Others felt a weird but undeniable grief at the loss of Mark Stone. "It's like someone died — someone you actually missed," recalls Monroe, his climbing buddy. "It's a mixture of grieving and anger. It's like someone's evaporated, because the person you knew wasn't the person you know."

With threats from some of the more extreme anarchists and radicals, Kennedy went underground. Afraid for his life, he traveled London with a hoodie pulled down to conceal his face, before fleeing to America to hide out at his brother's house in Cleveland. "I just was filled with huge remorse and regret," he says. "I didn't see the point of living anymore." One dark night that winter, he walked out the door and sat in the snow, intent on freezing himself to death. "Don't be a dick," his brother told him. "There's a lot more out there for you."

THE MORE, FOR KENNEDY, CAME sooner than he expected. One day, while he was still in Cleveland contemplating suicide, he heard from an old friend of Mark Stone's. Back in England, six defendants in the Ratcliffe-on-Soar case were facing trial, and the friend [Cont. on 71]

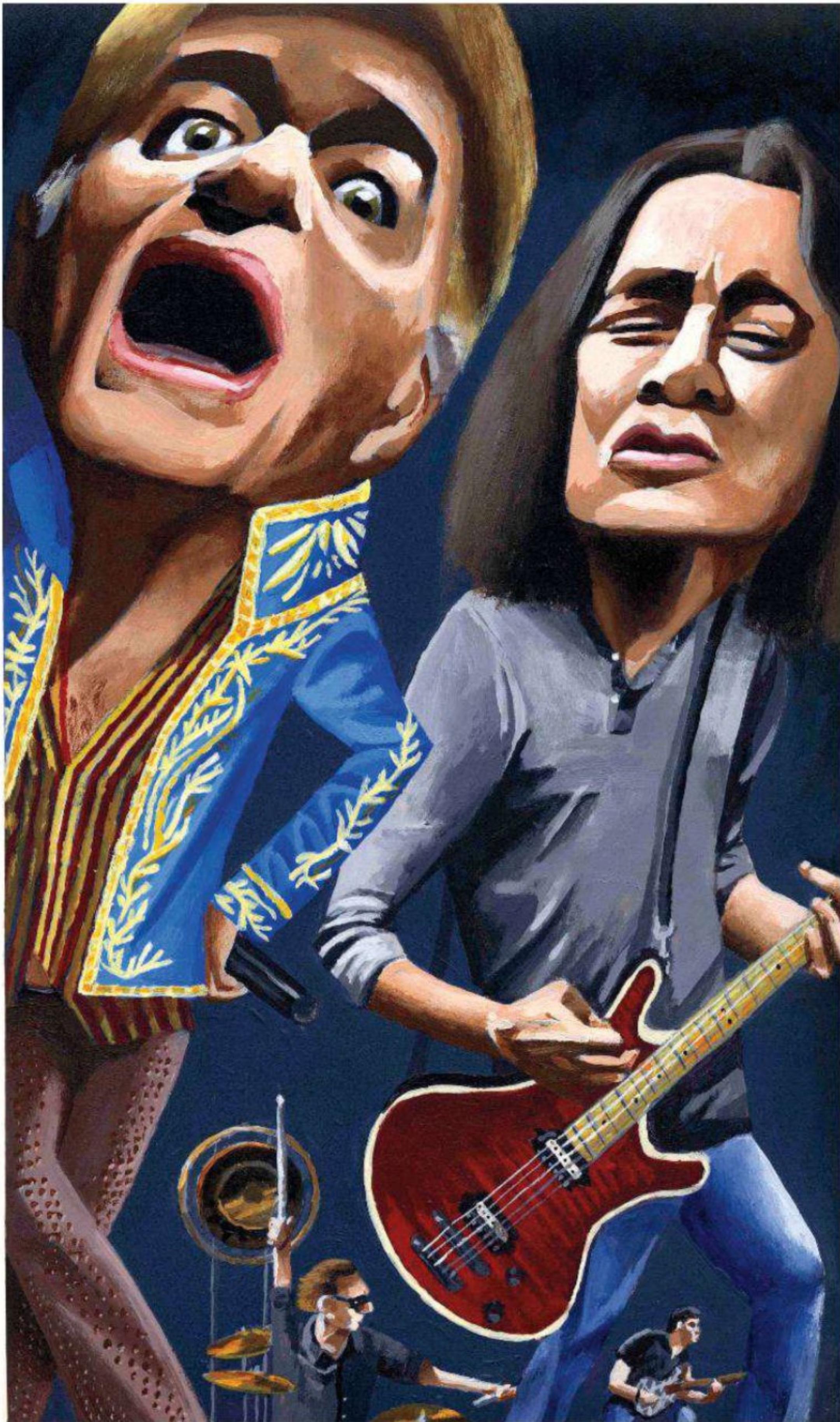
I LIKE EATING
A LITTLE BIT
BETTER.

I ALSO LIKE
EATING A LOT
BIT DELICIOUSER.



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Just what fans have waited for – Dave, Eddie and a real Van Halen album

Van Halen

★★★½

A Different Kind of Truth
Interscope

BY ROB SHEFFIELD



We've earned this, right? When David Lee Roth and Van Halen went down their own separate mean streets in the Eighties, who paid the price? We did. Van Halen fans everywhere have suffered through the years, waiting for this reunion. We don't need it to be *Fair Warning* or *Van Halen II*. We don't even need it to be *Diver Down*. We just deserve a break.

Well, as the man used to say: one break, coming up. Van Halen's "heard you missed us, we're back" album is not only the most long-awaited reunion joint in the history of reunion joints, it is – against all reasonable expectations – a real Van Halen album. It's sonically closer to *1984* than to *5150*, but it's closer to 1980's *Women and Children First* than to either – no synth glop, no ballads. Eddie always liked to compare the band's sound to "Godzilla waking up," but this is the real deal. And the old lizard sounds hungry to chomp some power lines.

A Different Kind of Truth is the first Van Halen album since the Nineties dregs of *Balance* and *Van Halen III*, which were just humiliating Styx rips. But Eddie has rediscovered his guitar and unplugged the synths, as if Roth's presence reminded Eddie whom his band is named after. Since there's never been a single Van Halen fan in history who secretly wished Eddie would put down the guitar and

play more keyboards, this is a coup. Especially because Eddie's solos have the fluency of his early Eighties playing – it's a treat to hear him stretch out on "Big River" and "Blood and Fire."

If the songs are based on 1970s demos, that was a wise move, because wherever these 13 tunes came from, there isn't a single Waldo on the bus. The tempos are atomic-punk fast, letting Alex Van Halen rock out on the drums for the first time since his flaming-gong days. Original bassist Michael Anthony is missed for his bottom end, and even more for his kicked-in-the-nads harmonies. But Wolfgang Van Halen, Eddie's son, acquits himself superbly – he definitely doesn't flunk if anyone asks, "Have you seen Junior's grades?"

As for Diamond Dave, the gods only made one of him, because they couldn't take the competition. Now *this* is a rock star, except no other rock star would try to get away with this many cornball one-liners ("It's looking like the city towed my other apartment!"). He's lost a high note or two, but the "stone-cold sister soccer moms" he pursues in "Honeybabysweetiedoll" probably like him better this way.

Toward the end, Roth reaches down between his legs, eases the seat back and shifts into "Stay Frosty." It's not just the showstopper – it's a four-minute anthology of everything that rules about Van Halen. It begins as an acoustic country-blues goof, then switches into metal bombast, as Eddie's fingers and Roth's lips take turns showing off. "Stay Frosty" ends with the trick Van Halen did better than any band ever: the crashing power-chord-and-drumroll finale, which goes on for 30 insane seconds. It's ridiculous. It's obnoxious. It's awesome. This moment alone sums up why the album needed to happen. We've earned it. And so have they.

Key Tracks: "Stay Frosty," "Big River," "As Is," "Blood and Fire"



LISTEN NOW!

Hear key tracks from these albums at rollingstone.com/albums.

Love, Sex and Tons of Fuzz

Over-the-top noise meets heavy-breathing romance on duo's thrilling second album

Sleigh Bells ★★★★

Reign of Terror Mom & Pop



Can an industrial-strength guitar-noise duo blow up into the most pelican-fly rock band around? Of course it can, if it's Sleigh Bells. Guitarist Derek Miller and vocalist Alexis Krauss are the kind of music geeks who had their formative-crush experiences soundtracked to My Bloody Valentine and Slayer records. Sleigh Bells scored with their 2010 debut, *Treats*, but *Reign of Terror* is even noisier, funnier and smuttier. They bring a proudly aggressive sass to all the heavily treated guitars – now that they've proven they can get away with such a massive sound, they're out to see what tricks they can do with it.

Reign of Terror flattens you with its cartoonishly over-modulated, into-the-red guitar sound. It even opens with a parody of a stadium rock show, with Miller shredding as Krauss commands, "Enemies, on your knees!" The songs are heavy-breathing sex chants with a heart of darkness. "Demons" is an *homage* to the early-1970s attack of Black Sabbath, and "Leader of the Pack" is guitar gauze in the style of Nineties psychedelia like Pale Saints. And the brilliant "You Lost Me" is a goof on Eighties power-ballad dreck, tweaking Def Leppard's *Hysteria* and ZZ Top's *Afterburner* the way Bon Iver tweaked Peter Cetera and Bruce Hornsby. Sleigh Bells sound like noise romantics at heart – even when they salute "teenage metalheads," the kids are "holding hands through your favorite bands." And the playfully lecherous lyrics to "Crush" are no joke, even though "crush" also describes what Miller tries to do to your eardrums. Best of all is "Road to Hell," which has a cheery melody, even though Krauss is chanting, "Don't run away from me, baby/Just go away from me, baby." Now that's a breakup song to cherish.

Key Tracks:
"Crush," "Road to Hell," "Leader of the Pack"

ROB SHEFFIELD



SLAYING
Derek Miller
and Alexis
Krauss

Sinéad O'Connor



How About I Be Me (and You Be You)? *One Little Indian*
Irish drama queen is back – and still pissed



"I bleed the blood of Jesus over you," declares Sinéad O'Connor on "Take Off Your

Shoes," a gospel-rock indictment targeting the recent Catholic Church child-abuse scandals. From a singer who tore up the pope's photo on *Saturday Night Live* and who tends to get filed under "bat-shit crazy," the viscera isn't surprising. What may be is the empathy, wit and beauty on this focused LP. The naughty reggae-folk "4th and Vine" channels the Dixie Cups' "Going to the Chapel," and "Queen of Denmark" is a wickedly hilarious lover's rant. On the power ballad "I Had a Baby," O'Connor cops, "I was always crazy" – true, perhaps. But it's a condition still fueling fierce art.

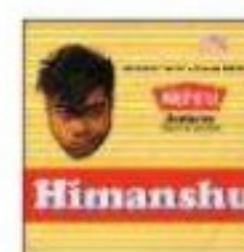
WILL HERMES

Key Tracks: "Take Off Your Shoes," "Queen of Denmark"

Himanshu



Nehru Jackets *Greedhead*
Das Racist MC's comic and caustic brain dump



Das Racist's wiliest rhymer is also their most acerbic joker. On his first solo mix-

tape, Himanshu snipes at the NYPD ("New York's spineless"), Whole Foods ("I be at bodegas") and his own success ("I went from 'Why bother?' to 'Fuck it, yo, I'll holla for the mighty dolla'") with a grown-up stoner's finesse. His soft spot? Ladies: "They smell great/I think about 'em real late/They're better than steak, or high stakes," he rhymes on "Womyn." Lag time is a given at 25 tracks, but Mike Finito keeps the beats entertaining, setting Punjabi vocals and shoegaze satire over 1990s boom-bap, taking hip-hop nostalgia around the world and back.

MONICA HERRERA

Key Tracks: "Womyn," "NYC Cops," "Yo What's Good New York"

TOP SINGLES

M. Ward

★★★½

"The First Time I Ran Away"

This teaser from Ward's sixth LP indulges in atmospherics so deeply that he nearly dissolves in them, lapsing into ethereal oohs and a murmured incantation about a waterfall. Ward sheds his old-bluesman tics for a soul-folk croon – and the guitars, as usual, are sublime.

WILL HERMES

Alabama Shakes

★★★

"How Many More Times"

Brittany Howard – the wrecking ball who fronts this roots band – turns Zeppelin's blues miasma into a scorched-earth riposte. When she moans, "I got another child on the way, that makes 11/I'm in constant heaven," sexual abandon takes on a whole new burden.

JON DOLAN

Fucked Up

★★★½

"Year of the Tiger"

The Ontario punks' fifth Chinese New Year single is a 15-minute hardcore odyssey narrated by the scabrous howls of Damian Abraham. "The tiger lives afraid as the tiger dies," he roars – but by the end, it's frightened of exactly no one.

STACEY ANDERSON

One Direction

★★½

"What Makes You Beautiful"

The boy-band cycle rears its head with this inevitable tween lady-killer, a self-esteem jolt ("You're insecure, don't know what for") sung over pop-rock crunch by five pristinely coiffed lads. They make the JoBros look like Betty White's used toys.

MONICA HERRERA



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FROM TOP: C. FLANIGAN/FILMAGIC; JAMIE HEWLETT

Gorillaz and Friends Throw a Freaky Party

Gorillaz feat. Andre 3000 and James Murphy

★★★½ "DoYaThing"

LCD Soundsystem mastermind James Murphy will soon be marketing his own espresso blend, and he probably blazed up a blammo batch of it for this zippy future-freak soul summit. Putting this many visionary types in one studio could've made for a mess, but they lock in for a three-man weave – like the Bird-McHale-Parish of avant-R&B. Damon Albarn lays down a double-time funk

charge and lyrical patter about being a "pale imitator of a boy in the sky," while Murphy unspools tweak-y falsetto silliness and Andre 3000 drops a devastating freestyle – "I'm an Outkast but you're into me/Summer got mad 'cause winter blew me" – before taking us to the rivers of Mars like a sweetly zonked Al Green. The comedown from this must've been brutal.

J.D.



SPEED DEMONS

Andre 3000 and Murphy with Gorillaz

Decemberists' Great Escape

The Decemberists

★★★ "One Engine"

The Decemberists' Colin Meloy is clearly more of a *Middlemarch* kind of guy than a young-adult sci-fi fan. But he also loves a literary challenge, and his contribution to the T Bone Burnett-produced *Hunger Games* soundtrack not only nails the book's dystopic-frenzy/teen-torment vibe, it also invents a new genre: chase-scene indie rock. Over a heated folk gallop and some Edge-does-Shaft guitar peels, Meloy sings about breaking away from dark forces trying to "run you aground," something every state-sanctioned, murder-oriented game-show contestant – and American teenager – can keenly relate to.

J.D.

Santigold's Battle Anthem

Santigold

★★★½ "Disparate Youth"

On her 2008 debut, Santi White synthesized New Wave, post-punk, pop and dancehall strains into her own new flavor of downtown cool. She's at it again on the first single from her long-gestating follow-up – a slippery earworm that opens with airy digital fanfare reminiscent of Drake's triumphal *Take Care* cut "Headlines," before falling into a dark, post-dub groove that's altogether sexier and more conflicted. "We know now we want more/A life worth fighting for," she purrs over panicky percussion and machine-gun bass – a revolutionary anthem for a frustrated generation.

SIMON VOZICK-LEVINSON

BOOTLEG



Cheap Trick

The Buckhead Theatre, Atlanta, December 28th, 2011

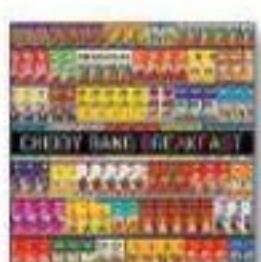
In April 1978, Cheap Trick played one of the most famous concerts in rock history at Tokyo's Budokan arena, producing a live LP that sold millions and made them superstars. Their fortunes waned by the Eighties, but the band never stopped touring. This gig – held at a 2,500-seater in Atlanta – sounds surprisingly close to Cheap Trick at Budokan, as the power-pop quartet bang through classics like "Oh Candy," "Dream Police" and "I Want You to Want Me." Toward the end, they break out a stunning cover of "Golden Slumbers/Carry That Weight/The End" that showcases singer-guitarist Robin Zander's still-mighty voice – and by the time they reach the apex of "Sur- render," the crowd is losing its collective mind. It sounds like Cheap Trick are playing these tunes for the first time, not the 10,000th. Although back problems forced their original drummer, Bun E. Carlos, off the road years ago, the rest of the band is intact and capable as ever. They haven't headlined an arena in many years, but Cheap Trick deserve credit for keeping the dream alive.

ANDY GREENE

Chiddy Bang ★★

Breakfast Virgin/IRS

Philly rappers test your cuteness threshold



This pop-rap pair's debut LP opens with sounds of children playing, and infantile vocal snippets tie it together: twee, high-pitched, pre-verbal. The Philadelphia duo sampled MGMT's "Kids" on 2010's global hit "Opposite of Adults"; *Breakfast* proves that not growing up is their obsession. Indie electro-dribble runs thick as Nigerian-American rapper Chiddy Anamege makes room for guests like Ellie Goulding and Icona Pop, gets emo about girl-friend woes (most notably on the contraception PSA "Baby Roulette"), feigns blindness over rolling pianos in "Ray Charles" and references Philly's own Fresh Prince twice. But ultimately, your Chiddy Bang tolerance rests on your ability to endure the self-consciously cute.

CHUCK EDDY

Key Tracks: "Baby Roulette," "Mind Your Manners"

The Jezabels

★★★★★

Prisoner Mom + Pop

Quartet bring New Romantic heat from Down Under



The full-length U.S. debut by this Australian quartet is a fresh blast of vintage turmoil: a robust spin on the echo-laden romanticism of early-Eighties New Wave rock. "I'll be waiting/For your never-ending wave/For our passage to arise," singer Hayley Mary promises in "Endless Summer," in a low, fretful tone before arcing over Heather Shannon's keyboards and Sam Lockwood's guitar like Björk leading a young U2 – or maybe the adult Kate Bush fronting guitar modernists Explosions in the Sky. The songs are intrepid dissections of desperate connection ("City Girl," "Nobody Nowhere"). The result should be the start of beautiful friendships here. DAVID FRICKE

Key Tracks: "Endless Summer," "Nobody Nowhere"

Every Brick in 'The Wall'

A new version of Floyd's grand opus on alienation shows how *The Wall* was built

Pink Floyd ★★★★½

The Wall: Immersion Edition Capitol/EMI



There was agreement, at first. In the summer of 1978, Roger Waters, Pink Floyd's singer-bassist and primary songwriter, presented the other members with two sets of demos and a choice: Pick one for the next album. The rest of the Floyd wisely voted for Waters' bleak, enraged observation on emotional exile and totalitarian celebrity, provisionally titled *Bricks in the Wall*. (The other demos became Waters' 1984 midlife-crisis opera, *The Pros and Cons of Hitchhiking*.) It was also a disastrous decision. The Floyd fell into eventually fatal throes of conflict and division on the way to the 1979 album's grim, towering splendor. Waters designed, and the band built, *The Wall* too well.

Immersion is a good way to characterize the grip and whirl of construction recounted on the two CDs of demos in this seven-disc box, which includes a previously released recording of the 1980-81 stage show. (An *Experience* edition has the original album and a single CD of demos.) Excerpts of Waters' early sketches are sequenced into a stark vertigo of his contempt ("Mother") and despair ("Goodbye Cruel World") at birth. Later band demos – "Another Brick in the Wall, Part 2" as a crisp funeral march instead of disco revolt; "The Doctor," a prototype of "Comfortably Numb" – and discarded ideas like the plaintive "Teacher, Teacher" and the static blues "Sexual Revolution" prove development came slow if steady. It is obvious, too, that Waters' authoritarian drive was not enough to get this job done. The crucial difference between Waters' initial notion of "Run Like Hell" – slow, snarky bullying – and the perversely gleaming menace of the final version is in David Gilmour's demo of jangling commandant's-strut guitar. D.F.

Key Tracks:
"Run Like Hell"
(Waters' demo),
"The Doctor"

The Chieftains

★★★

Voice of Ages Hear/Concord

Irish group turns 50 with Bon Iver, Pistol Annies



The Chieftains have collaborated with everyone from Ziggy Marley to Madonna, but this 50th-anniversary album is the Celtic traditionalists' first-ever foray into indie rock. The Decemberists' Colin Meloy spins a springy version of Bob Dylan's "When the Ship Comes In," Bon Iver's Justin Vernon croons a ghostly murder ballad, and alt-country bands like Punch Brothers reel 'n' jig it up nicely. Indie rock's cult of schlubby singing doesn't always merge with the Chieftains' crystalline professionalism. So it takes a real pro – Miranda Lambert's roots band Pistol Annies – to truly shake our shamrock; their sumptuously lilting take on "Come All Ye Fair and Tender Ladies" is sweet and strong like a noon Guinness on a Kerryman's gums. JON DOLAN

Key Track: "Come All Ye Fair and Tender Ladies"

Jay Farrar, Will Johnson, Anders Parker and Yim Yames

★★★

New Multitudes Rounder

Guys from Uncle Tupelo, MMJ flesh out Guthrie's words



Making séance music from dead singers' notebooks is now a familiar songwriting practice, and this session, spearheaded by Jay Farrar, taps the same source Jeff Tweedy (his old Uncle Tupelo partner) took with Billy Bragg on the two *Mermaid Avenue* LPs: Woody Guthrie's fat verse archives. Four singer-songwriters tag-team in a folk-rock vein, and the high points are when voices unite; see the title track and the Jim James-led "Talking Empty Bed Blues." Elsewhere, dudes sound like themselves, but with mouths full of Guthrie's wit and soul. WILL HERMES

Key Tracks: "New Multitudes," "Talking Empty Bed Blues"



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Alex Chilton

★★★½

Free Again: The "1970" Sessions *Omnivore*

Rough-cut gems from a great songwriter still finding his way



In 1969, even before the end of his Top 40 band the Box Tops, singer Alex Chilton started making his first solo album. In 1970, he abandoned it to co-found Big Star, the Memphis version of the Beatles. *Free Again* finds Chilton, not yet 20, in fast bloom. The title track, "The EMI Song (Smile for Me)" and "Every Day as We Grow Closer" are ravishing, original amalgams of the Beach Boys, the British Invasion and country soul. There are also raunchy why-bother covers of the Archies and the Rolling Stones, an eerie preview of Chilton's subsequent career — confident in his gifts, always chafing against them.

DAVID FRICKE

Key Tracks: "The EMI Song (Smile for Me)," "Come On Honey"

Gotye ★★★½

Making Mirrors

Samples 'N' Seconds/Fairfax/Universal Republic

Sample-mad Aussie likes his pop both weird and earnest



Gotye is a Belgian-born Australian with a Portuguese-looking stage name that he pronounces like a Frenchman ("Gauthier"). That's just the beginning of the cosmopolitanism on his bracing U.S. debut. Gotye crams in a little bit of everything: Turkish drums, West African thumb pianos, a bass line constructed from samples of an instrument called the Winton Musical Fence. (It's an actual fence in the Australian outback.) He pours these sounds into songs that run from buzzy garage funk to psychedelic neo-exotica to electro Motown. The result: ingenious, oddly touching, refreshingly emphatic bedroom pop. Think Beck with less irony, and more, um, fence.

JODY ROSEN

Key Tracks: "Somebody That I Used to Know," "Easy Way Out"

Schoolboy Q

★★★½ Habits & Contradictions

Top Dawg

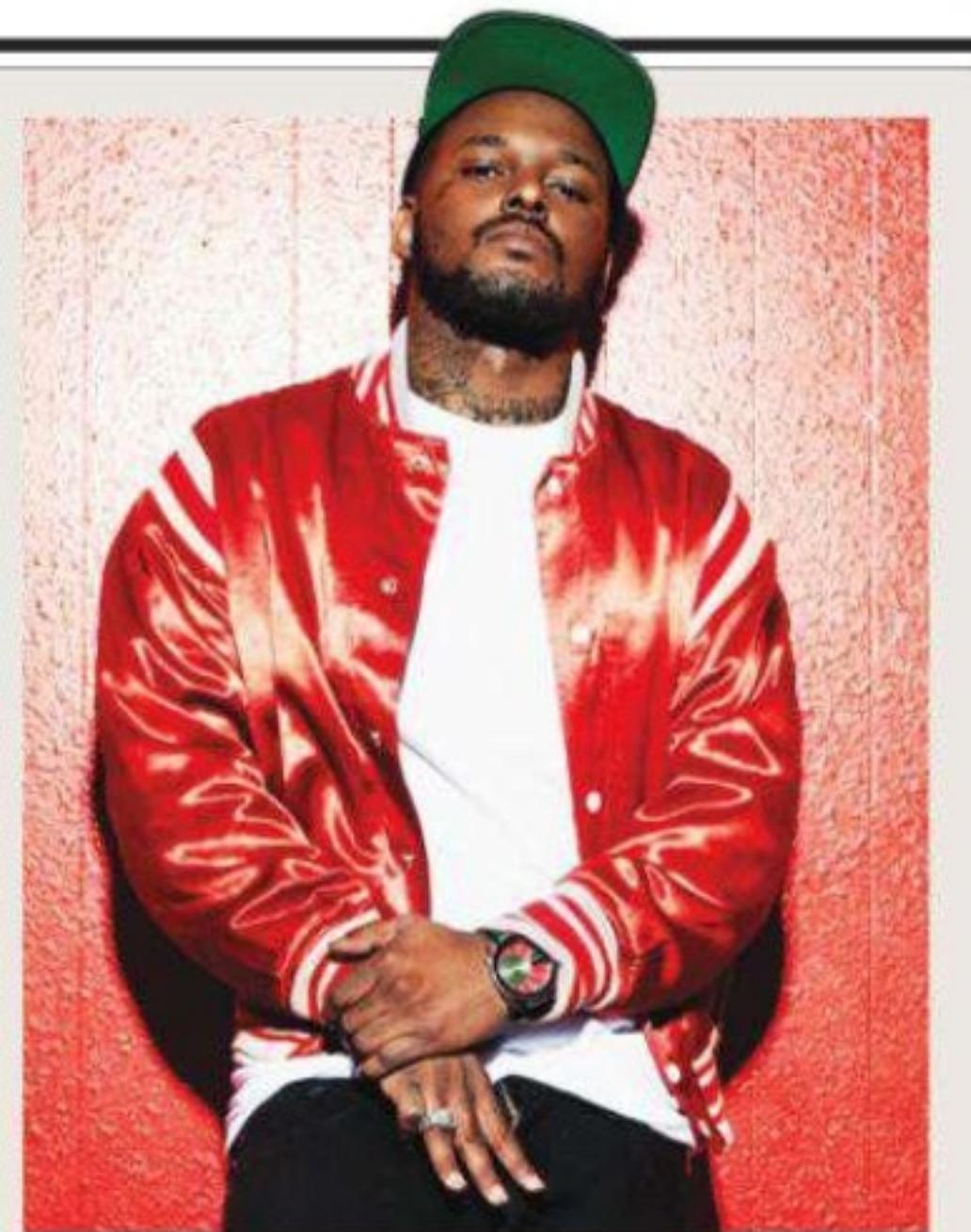
West Coast MC takes off with steely-eyed swagger and Wu-style beats

ARTIST TO WATCH

Schoolboy Q hails from a West Coast weed-rap crew called Black Hippy, but you won't see him on the street corner rocking a dashiki. On his second album, the former gang member's pusher-man realism is emotionally hard and murky, and his tracks are dense and dark-tinted, more Wu-Tang-steeped trip-hop than California funk. On "My Homie," an old friend's snitching makes for hurt feelings; on "How We Feeling," tea-kettle keyboard whir and a bruising slow-motion beat render a playa anthem at once majestic and haunted; and the hard-grooving single "There He Go" is an image of a Stringer Bell-like dude who has transcended the need to floss: "Ain't got no jewelry on, still I'm shinin' hard/Ain't got no bodyguard walkin' solo through the mall." Turns out this 'Boy is his own man.

JON DOLAN

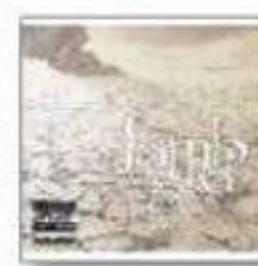
Key Tracks: "There He Go," "My Homie"

**KEY FACTS****Hometown**
Los Angeles**Backstory** Former Crip and junior-college football player Quincy Matthew Hanley picks up the mic and makes waves with his debut, 2011's *Setbacks*, which he Twitter-released as a free download.**Social Network** Q is part of the Black Hippy clique, along with rising star MC Kendrick Lamar. The group's name is meant to indicate free thinking — or "not going about things the way the industry wants you to," says Q.**Lamb of God**

★★½

Resolution Epic

Metal guys play it a little too straight on seventh album



Too brutal for thrash, too lyrically comprehensible for death metal, too purist to resort to screamo or rapcore choruses, Virginia's Lamb of God are just commercial enough to have scored three consecutive Top 10 albums. On *Resolution*, the fivesome lurch into cruel claustrophobia again and again as Randy Blythe hectors angrily at enemies lying, dying or both: "The walking dead! Living a lie!" he rails in the mosh-pit tantrum "Cheated." Occasionally — the foggy instrumental "Barbarosa," or the boogie-bottomed "To the End" — they branch out slightly. But mostly, Lamb of God stick to conservative values that metalheads can respect and everyone else can continue to ignore.

CHUCK EDDY

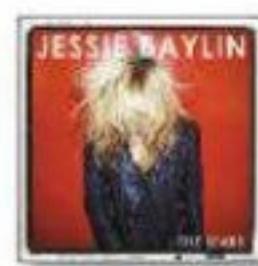
Key Tracks: "To the End," "Cheated"

Jessie Baylin

★★★

Little Spark *Blonde Rat*

Queen of Leon steps out with noirish Southern soul



"I'm sipping on your hidden stash of whiskey/A little drunker than you know," Jessie Baylin confesses with apt blurred enunciation in "Hurry Hurry." Actually, nothing moves fast in the music or the relationships on her third album. Baylin examines faltering affairs and resigns herself to a lot of waiting in a spacey kind of Dixie soul, like Portishead with a girlish Dusty Springfield at the mic. The effect, in "Joy Is Suspicious" and the title song, is both seductive and distant, as if she's singing across miles of echo and doubt. This is an album of potent moods. But it would also be good to hear how Baylin, who is married to Kings of Leon drummer Nathan Followill, sounds when filled with joy.

D.F.

Key Tracks: "Hurry Hurry," "Joy Is Suspicious"

Estelle ★★★½*All of Me* *Homeschool/Atlantic*

British nice girl makes her long-awaited return



Estelle is the rare one-name diva whose main appeal is her approachability. It's been four years since the round-the-way London girl's breakthrough, Kanye-abetted hit, "American Boy," but she's still the same proud graduate of the Lauryn Hill/Mary J. Blige school of warm, tough hip-hop R&B. Co-writer John Legend and guests like Rick Ross and Janelle Monáe help Estelle construct a multi-faceted album — from the resilient post-breakup neo-soul of "Thank You" to the self-affirming boom-bap of "Speak Ya Mind." "I can be so pretentious/But he likes me all the same," she sings on the gingerly hopeful "Break My Heart"; it's her kind of realness, conversational and smooth just the same.

J.D.

Key Tracks: "Break My Heart," "Thank You"

Metallica

★★★½

Beyond Magnetic

Warner Bros.

Four furious death odes from the vaults



The line between hot stuff and not-quite-right was mighty high when Metallica left these four hymns to the big oblivion, cut for 2008's *Death Magnetic*, on the outtakes shelf. "Hate Train" is old-school chop-and-charge with the dry, corrosive fidelity of *Kill 'Em All*. The midsection in "Just a Bullet Away" recalls the expanding dynamics of 1991's *Metallica*. Maybe there was too much history here to feel new. But this is heavy gold as rejects go. The vicious triumph of "Hell and Back" and "Rebel of Babylon," driven by blurred-wrist rhythm guitar, should go into live rotation and stay there.

DAVID FRICKE

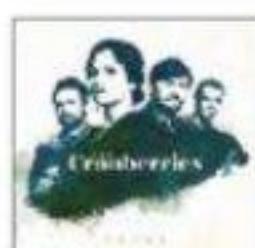
Key Tracks: "Just a Bullet Away," "Hate Train"

The Cranberries

★★★

Roses Cooking Vinyl/
Downtown

Nineties stars come back softly, in a good way



The Cranberries' fusion of the Smiths and Sinéad O'Connor was weirdly fetching when it drifted out of Ireland in the early 1990s, but the band grew bombastic as sales skyrocketed. So it's a relief that the group's comeback LP brims with Celt-tinged dream pop, as Dolores O'Riordan's broad singing melts into cardigan-cozy jangle. There are lyrical uh-oh moments ("Schizophrenic Playboy"), but *Roses* reminds us that note-hammering Brits from Adele to Florence owe Dolly a small debt.

JON DOLAN

Key Tracks: "Waiting in Walthamstow," "Tomorrow"

C BRANDON/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

UPDATE: NEW ROOTS



A MODERN HOEDOWN
Punch Brothers



Punch Brothers ★★★½

Who's Feeling Young Now? Nonesuch

You've got to admire a crew that aspires to be a string-band version of Radiohead. Mandolin shredder Chris Thile and his mates make that notion explicit on their third LP with a dumbfounding cover of "Kid A," the digital bleeps and bleeps of the original translated into fiddle abstractions and clipped banjo chatter. Unlike the 40-minute-plus suite that filled out the group's 2008 debut, the songs here want to be songs, and instrumentals are mostly held at bay. Thile has a fine tenor, and if the originals don't reach pop heights, they strike a nice balance between old-school and modern. In "This Girl," a guy asks God to help him get a woman, while "New York City" savors the lonely romance of Gotham. The acoustic framework dazzles - wild virtuosity used for more than just virtuosity.

WILL HERMES



Carolina Chocolate Drops

★★★★

Leaving Eden Nonesuch

After killing it on "Hit 'Em Up Style" - the cover of Blu Cantrell's 2001 R&B hit that branded its breakout *Genuine Negro Jig* LP - this mischievous old-time string band might've been tempted to cut a whole bunch of amusing pop covers. But the trio's latest confirms they're more than a novelty machine. Produced by alt-country guru Buddy Miller, *Eden* grows handsome fruit from a nation's tangled roots: "Ruby, Are You Mad at Your Man?" turns a 1940 hillbilly yodel by banjo picker Cousin Emmy into a roaring country blues; Rhiannon Giddens veers between Miranda Lambert and Beyoncé on the original "Country Girl"; and "Mahalla" is inspired by a YouTube video of an African guitarist playing slide with a teaspoon in his mouth. *Leaving Eden* is a lesson in 21st-century American folk - a tradition that's as miscegenated as ever, and stronger for it.

W.H.



The Unthanks ★★★½

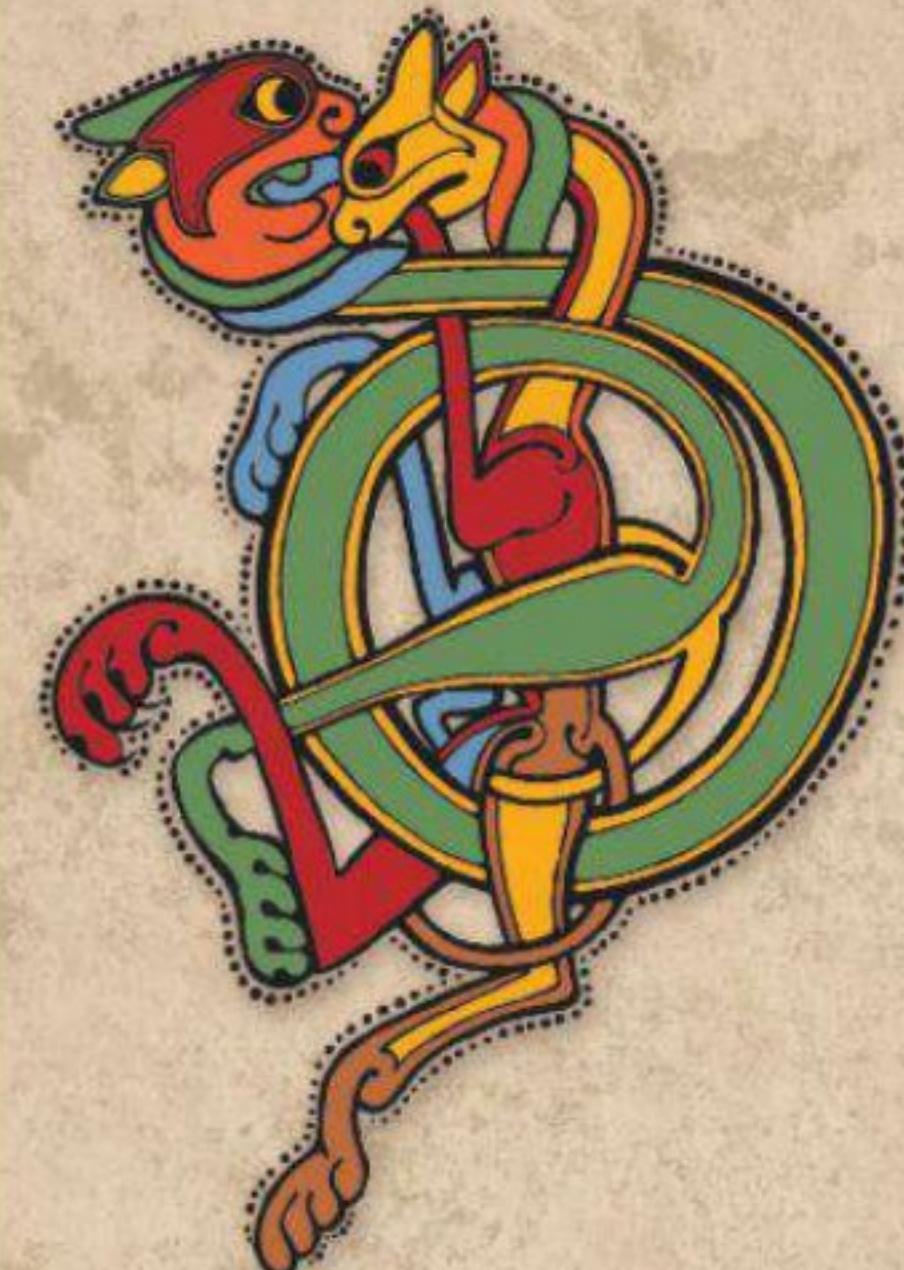
The Songs of Robert Wyatt and Antony and the Johnsons Rough Trade

Robert Wyatt, an avant-pop Englishman, and the transgender singer-songwriter Antony Hegarty are, in their way, folk composers, drawing from the same territory as Britain's greatest public-domain songs: class, struggle and identity. On this wonderful live album, the acclaimed British group led by Rachel and Becky Unthank interprets Wyatt's forlorn "Sea Song" and the fragile pledge of Antony's "You Are My Sister" with spare grit and a silvery deceptive spine running through the sisters' Earth-angel voices. The subtitle, *Diversions Vol. 1*, suggests further provocative explorations are in store.

D.F.

THE CHIEFTAINS

celebrate their 50th anniversary with musical visionaries and kindred spirits



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featuring

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The Civil Wars
The Decemberists
Imelda May
Lisa Hannigan
The Low Anthem
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Pistol Annies
Punch Brothers
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Everything Old Is New Again

Stick your head in the past to pick the winners of this Oscar race By Peter Travers

BEST PICTURE

The Artist
The Descendants
Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close
The Help
Hugo
Midnight in Paris
Moneyball
The Tree of Life
War Horse

FAVES The Academy of old farts and antiquated sciences anointed nine films to compete this year, and the odds favor the movie with the most nominations. *Hugo*, Martin Scorsese's 3D love letter to France's silent-movie past, has 11. *The Artist*, Michel Hazanavicius' black-and-white love letter to Hollywood's silent-movie past, has 10. That's a dead heat.

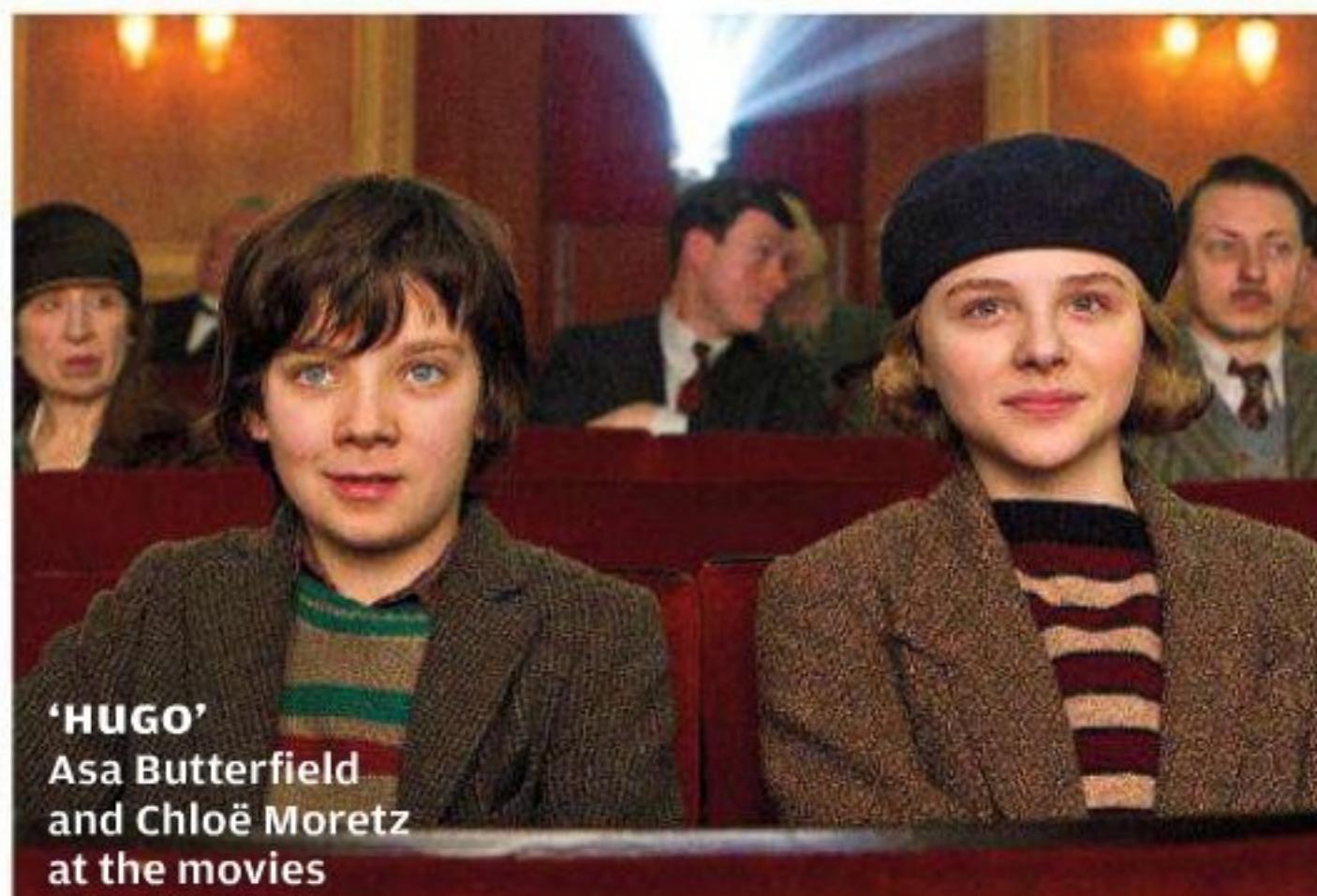
THE SPOILER Some of us still have hopes for *The Descendants*, the comedy-drama about a Hawaiian family in crisis, with five noms. But there's more buzz on *The Help*, about African-American maids standing up for their civil rights in 1960s Mississippi. The film version of Kathryn Stockett's bestseller has only four noms, but it hit the box-office jackpot with \$169 million. Money talks.

MY FANTASY That the un-nominated *Drive*, the year's most adventurous expression of pure cinema, will inspire a write-in vote and result in the elimination of *Extremely Dull & Incredibly Exploitative*, the 9/11 drama that deserves no place on any sane best list.

THE WINNER I have to go with *The Artist*, which may have amassed a pitiful \$21 million from paying customers but which captures the imagination of all who see it, and Oscar voters have definitely seen it.



'THE ARTIST'
Jean Dujardin
as a silent-screen star lost in celluloid



'HUGO'
Asa Butterfield
and Chloë Moretz
at the movies

BEST ACTOR

Demián Bichir *A Better Life*
George Clooney
The Descendants
Jean Dujardin *The Artist*
Gary Oldman *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*
Brad Pitt *Moneyball*

FAVES Don't always go with the hotties. According to media oddsmakers, this is a contest between two of the sexiest guys alive. That would be George Clooney and Brad Pitt, veterans of the *Ocean's* trilogy and the erotic dreams of Oscar voters. That's a powerful combo. It also helps that Clooney, as

the land baron of *The Descendants*, and Pitt, as the general manager of the Oakland A's in *Moneyball*, are giving their best screen performances to date. Still, there are other forces at work.

THE SPOILER Jean Dujardin. The French actor is virtually unknown in America, except to those smart cultists who dote on the two OSS 117 James Bond spoofs Dujardin did for *Artist* director Michel Hazanavicius. But he's riding the wave of a film the Academy loves, and it doesn't hurt that he brings heart and soul to the role of a silent-film actor who stubbornly resists talking pictures.

MY FANTASY That the Academy will finally reward Gary Oldman. His virtuoso performance as Cold War spymaster George Smiley in *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* is time-capsule-worthy. The stunner is that this is Oldman's first Oscar nomination in a career that includes *Sid and Nancy*, *Prick Up Your Ears*, *JFK*, *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, *Hannibal*, the *Dark Knight* trilogy and the *Harry Potter* franchise. Are you kidding me, people? Wake up!

THE WINNER George Clooney, doing it the hard way in *The Descendants*, letting raw emotions replace the charm that comes easy to him. Clooney's Hawaiian lawyer is torn between preserving the land of his forefathers and selling out the values he was raised on. He's haunted by his past.

BEST ACTRESS

Glenn Close *Albert Nobbs*
Viola Davis *The Help*
Rooney Mara *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*
Meryl Streep *The Iron Lady*
Michelle Williams *My Week With Marilyn*

FAVES Ignore the youth element. The Academy is not buying this year. Yes, Rooney Mara (*The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*) is the one under-30 nominee to sneak in. But the focus will be on Meryl Streep, 62, Oscar royalty who earned her 17th acting nomination – the most ever! – for playing British prime minister Margaret Thatcher in *The Iron Lady*. And – shocker – two-time winner Streep hasn't taken home a golden dildio since, she says, "the Pleistocene era," meaning 1982's *Sophie's Choice*. The implication is clear that the Academy is way behind on its dues.

THE SPOILER Stand up and take a bow, Viola Davis. Try to imagine *The Help* without the piercing gravity Davis brings to the role of Aibileen Clark, the Mississippi housekeeper who has helped raise 17 white children but who is only beginning to find herself at the start of the civil rights movement. The main reason Davis isn't the odds-on favorite is that a few idiots believe Davis has a supporting role. I suggest they see *The Help* again, and with their eyes open this time.

MY FANTASY That if the Academy was actually capable of surprise, it would make it Michelle Williams as Marilyn Monroe in *My Week With Marilyn*. Williams' work goes beyond impersonation into something bone-deep. Monroe is an integral part of Hollywood's past, and Williams does myth and woman full justice.

THE WINNER Viola Davis, and not just to make history — Davis would be only the second black woman (after Halle Berry in *Monster's Ball*) since 1929 to win the Best Actress Oscar — but for inhabiting the role with every fiber of her being.

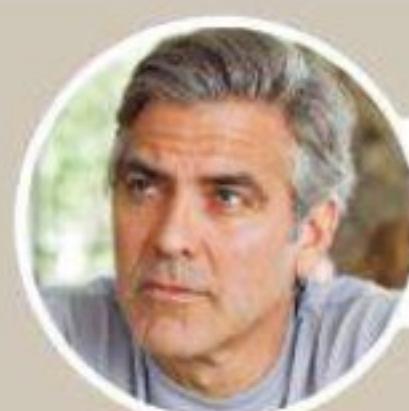
BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR

Kenneth Branagh *My Week With Marilyn*
Jonah Hill *Moneyball*
Nick Nolte *Warrior*
Christopher Plummer *Beginners*
Max von Sydow *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*

FAVES Old-timers are still growing strong. Jonah Hill, 28, is the only kid in this group. Kenneth Branagh is 51, and Nick Nolte has 20 years on him. Christopher Plummer and Max von Sydow are both 82. But the cock of the AARP walk is surely the magnificent Plummer, who has won the lion's share of awards so far for his *Beginners* role as a man who shocks his son by coming out at 75. A straight actor playing a doomed gay man is an Oscar good-luck charm (see Tom Hanks in *Philadelphia* and Sean Penn in *Milk*). Smart money goes here. **THE SPOILER** Max von Sydow. The Swedish actor, best known for his classic films with Ingmar Bergman, is well deserved.

THE CONTENDERS

FAVORITE



George Clooney

SPOILER



Jean Dujardin

BEST ACTOR



Meryl Streep

BEST ACTRESS



Viola Davis

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR



Christopher Plummer



Jonah Hill

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS



Octavia Spencer



Melissa McCarthy

ing of an Oscar. But, please, not for *Extremely Loud*, a tawdry piece of 9/11 exploitation. Yet Oscar voters I've spoken to get all mushy about von Sydow's role as a mystery man who doesn't speak except by raising his hands — YES is written on one palm, NO on the other. This is just the kind of hooey Oscar falls for. Shame. Jonah Hill would make such a better choice for hitting it straight down the line in *Moneyball*.

MY FANTASY That the Academy would come to its senses and realize that it should have nominated Albert Brooks for his delicious blend of mirth and menace in *Drive*.

THE WINNER Christopher Plummer. Rewarding a superb stage actor in his best screen role (though I loved his Mike Wallace in *The Insider*) salutes the whole of a glorious career.

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS

Bérénice Bejo *The Artist*
Jessica Chastain *The Help*
Melissa McCarthy *Bridesmaids*
Janet McTeer *Albert Nobbs*
Octavia Spencer *The Help*

FAVES Talk to anyone you want, but Octavia Spencer comes as close to a lock as anyone in this year's Oscar race. As Minny Jackson, the maid in *The Help* who decides she's mad as hell and is not gonna take it anymore, Spencer gives the film a core of fun and astonishing, scene-stealing feeling.

THE SPOILER No one who saw *Bridesmaids* can come away without screaming "Who-hoo!" for Melissa McCarthy as the member of the wedding who is not going to be the butt

of anyone's fat joke. Comedies don't get much respect from the Academy (*Bridesmaids* is not among the Best Picture nominees), but McCarthy could just be the exception.

MY FANTASY That the Academy would realize what it has in Jessica Chastain. She went beyond anyone's clichéd idea of white trash in *The Help*. But what about her 2011 brilliance in *Take Shelter*, *The Debt*, *Criollo* and *The Tree of Life*? Pay attention.

THE WINNER Octavia Spencer, for representing.

BEST DIRECTOR

Michel Hazanavicius

The Artist

Alexander Payne

The Descendants

Martin Scorsese

Hugo

Woody Allen

Midnight in Paris

Terrence Malick

The Tree of Life

FAVES They say the best director is always the anointed genius behind the best picture. Since *The Artist* is the favorite, director Michel Hazanavicius should follow suit. But...

THE SPOILER Martin Scorsese. Remember that *Hugo* received the most Oscar nominations this year (11, one more than *The Artist*). Scorsese won his first directing Oscar only five years ago, for *The Departed*, a crime drama that walked the mean streets by which the Academy defined Scorsese. But *Hugo* is a family film about a 13-year-old orphan (Asa Butterfield) who lives behind the clock in a Paris train station in 1931 and searches for the lost treasures of a reclusive film pioneer, Georges Méliès (Ben Kingsley). By shooting in 3D for the first time, Scorsese helped Méliès live again through the magic of cinema, reminding us that film at its best is the stuff that dreams are made of.

MY FANTASY That Scorsese can win as Best Director while *The Artist* wins as Best Picture, honoring the two movies this year that pay tribute to the past and the future of film.

THE WINNER Though I wish Scorsese and Hazanavicius would tie, the prize will go to Hazanavicius for making a silent film that speaks volumes. ☺

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MOVIES

SUNDANCE 2012



TOP PICK
Beasts
of the
Southern
Wild

Feeling Squeezed

A tough economy killed jackpot deals, but fresh talent stirred the indie spirit By Peter Travers

SOMETHING SPECIAL One movie that encapsulates the exhilaration of Robert Redford's Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, is Benh Zeitlin's *Beasts of the Southern Wild*. It's a startlingly beautiful and daringly creative first feature, shot on Super 16mm, about six-year-old Hushpuppy (Quvenzhané Wallis), a girl living in the confines of the Louisiana delta with no limits on her imagination. Zeitlin's indelibly haunting film runs free of Hollywood formula.

THE STAR HUSTLE High-profile talent came to Sundance with no distribution in place. Stephen Frears' *Lay the Favorite*, with Bruce Willis, drew yawns at screenings, but it eked out a deal. Spike Lee's self-financed *Red Hook Summer*, repping Lee at his best and worst in one volatile package, has not as yet. The top price for a movie, \$6 million, was paid for *The Surrogate*, the fact-based tale of a poet (a brilliant John Hawkes) in an iron lung who loses his virginity to a sex surrogate (Helen Hunt).

VOD That stands for Video on Demand. Learn it. VOD, which allows you to see a movie at home for a price at the same time it hits theaters, is fast becoming the salvation of indie cinema — to wit, Leslye Headland's bruisingly funny *Bachelorette*, a mean-girls take on *Bridesmaids*. Kirsten Dunst, Isla Fisher and Lizzy

Caplan are sublime and on-target as the film's top bitches.

THE 'IT' GIRL AND THE LEG-END She's Gina Rodriguez, 27, the dynamo who powers *Filly Brown*, the tale of an L.A. hip-hop artist. He's Frank Langella, 74, fully earning a Sundance standing O for his tour de force in *Robot & Frank*, about a retired thief who learns new tricks from a robot caretaker.

TEAMWORK It's hard to get a rom-com right, but in Lee Toland Krieger's *Celeste and Jesse Forever*, Rashida Jones (she co-wrote the terrific script) and SNL's Andy Samberg are hilarious and heartfelt as a couple who split without ever falling out of love.

MUSIC POWER Joe Berlinger's unmissable doc *Under African Skies* shows how Paul Simon defied a U.N. cultural boycott to work in South Africa during apartheid to record his landmark *Graceland* album in 1985. Simon's virtuosity, amped by a 2011 reunion concert, raises the potent and still relevant question of artistic freedom versus politics.

MONEY TALKS *Arbitrage*, the pow feature debut of Nicholas Jarecki, boasts an Oscar-caliber Richard Gere firing on all cylinders as a crooked Wall Street financier. Shimmering with the temptations that corrupt a culture, the first-rate *Arbitrage* stirs things up in the great Sundance tradition.

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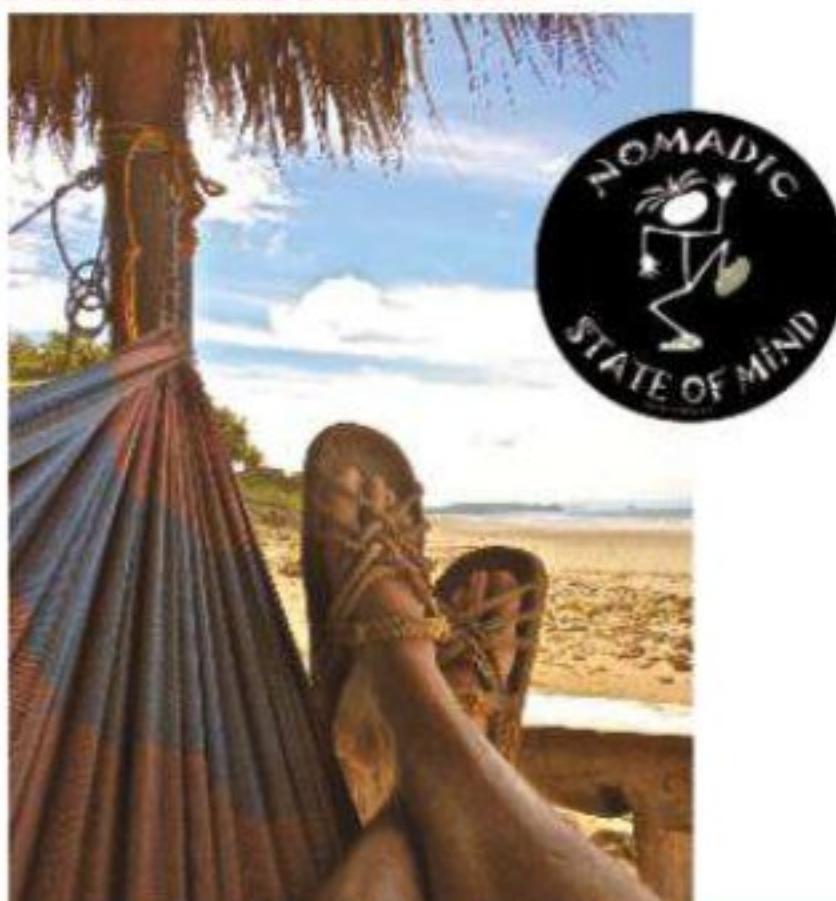
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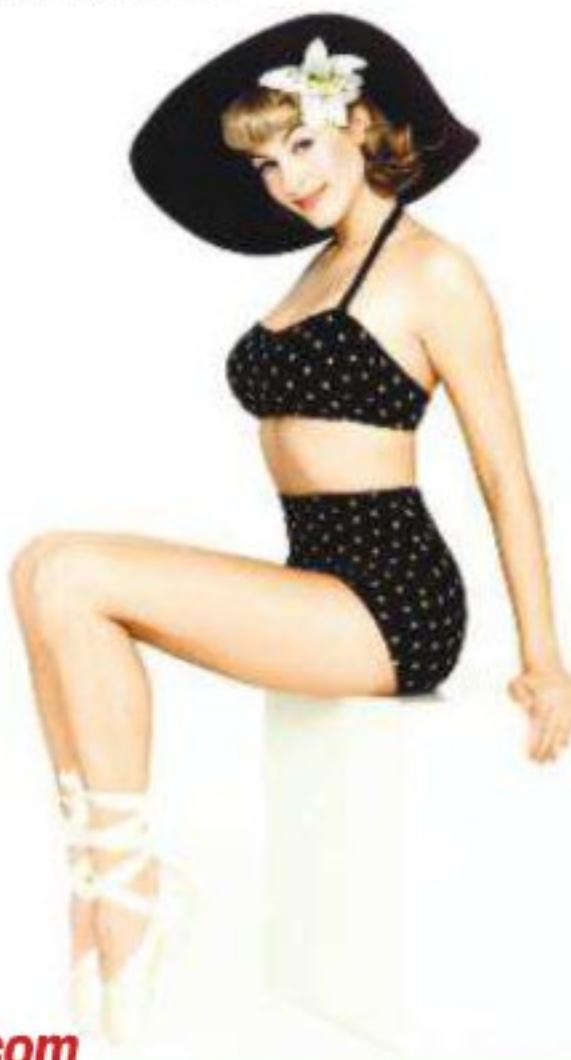
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DRAGON PRINCE

[Cont. from 49] ished," he says. He took a second year and revised it. He fleshed out characters, rewrote dialogue, changed much of the prose. Then he gave it to his parents, who by that time had a small self-publishing company they called Paolini International. "They thought it needed editing," he says, "but they liked it."

Paolini deferred college (he'd been accepted to Reed), and his parents went to work on *Eragon*. He peddled his novel at local shops dressed in medieval costume: a billowy red swordsman shirt, black pantaloons, black knee-high boots, black pirate sash and a black beret. "I would talk to every person who came into the store for eight hours straight," he says. He became the family breadwinner. "I was in the situation where books sold meant food on the table," he says. "A lot of authors are, but most aren't physically selling every single book." He could sell 40 books a day – not enough. The family's finances dwindled.

As luck would have it, the writer Carl Hiaasen came to vacation with his family in Livingston. His wife bought a copy of the self-published *Eragon* at the supermarket for their preteen son, Ryan. "I remember driving around and not a peep coming from the back seat of the car," Hiaasen says, "and Ryan just blazing through the book. Finally I said, 'How do you like it?' He looked up and said, 'Dad, this is better than *Harry Potter*.'" Hiaasen sent the book to his editor, and Knopf ended up buying *Eragon*, as well as two addi-

tional books from the unwritten trilogy (the overlong third was later split into a fourth). "I've been under deadline ever since," Paolini says.

PAOLINI AND I ARE BACK IN HIS boy cave, the one place he seems completely at ease. Hanging out in this room filled with homemade chain mail, sketches he's penned, a diary he's encrypted "in runes," and all those daggers and dragons, is like inhabiting his imagination. You can't help but wonder about the next thing to spring from it. Paolini hints that he might try science fiction, but says, "Don't hold me to it." He wants to take a little time off. The writing of *Inheritance* was excruciating for him. He was mainlining coffee and chocolate, grinding out only 350 words a day. It turns out he was suffering from an undiagnosed thyroid disorder, and he still seems drained from the ordeal.

After all, Paolini had three other people depending on him. Now that he's done, there's a different kind of pressure: The lives of his loved ones will change course as his own life does. Usually a rite of passage affects one person, not four. "We're going to be working in a different manner in the future," he says. "We'll still work together. I mean, you're always stronger together than you are apart."

The major criticism of Paolini's work is that he has recast timeworn fantasy elements and themes in an unoriginal way. To the haters, he's a plagiarist who has blatantly lifted ideas: plot from *Star*

Wars, rules of magic from Ursula K. Le Guin, dragon riders from Anne McCaffrey. "Shall we ding Joyce for reworking *The Odyssey*?" Paolini says. "That's the way culture works."

In the acknowledgments at the end of *Eldest*, his second novel, Paolini writes, "Eragon's journey has been my own: plucked from a sheltered rural upbringing ... enduring intense and arduous training; achieving success against all expectations; dealing with the consequences of fame; and eventually finding a measure of peace."

Obvious as the parallel is, melodramatic as the writing is, with this paragraph, Paolini pinpoints the ultimate appeal of the series. The books read as authentic because Paolini himself has grown up over the arc of the story, as Eragon has. Both boys were 15 when their journey began, and are adults when it ends.

Will Paolini ever leave home, as Eragon eventually does, now that his quest is over? "I sort of put a lot of things off because they would've been too disruptive to handle along with finishing the series," he says. I ask him what "things" he's referring to. For a rare moment, Paolini lets his guard down. It's like a sliver of light passing over a bedroom wall as a car drives by at night – perceptible, then gone. "Well, a lot of people move out of the house when they go to college," he says. "I certainly don't mind working here.... It's the ivory tower every author could wish for. But it's refreshing to not have to worry about a deadline."

PAUL McCARTNEY

[Cont. from 41] never heard), the results were horrendous. "I'd imagine it's not very good," says McCartney. He finds the story more comic than tragic: "We were stoned. I don't think there was anyone in that room who wasn't stoned. For some ungodly reason, I decided I'd get on the drums. It was just a party, you know. To use the word 'disorganized' is completely understating it. I might have made a feeble attempt to restore order – 'Guys, you know, let's think of a song, that would be a good idea' – but I can't remember if I did or not."

THIS MORNING, DOWNSTAIRS IN his studio, Paul McCartney sat down and wrote a new song. It's what he does. Whether he's newly divorced or newly married, happy or sad, the music arrives. "I had some thoughts last night, I woke up this morning, and took my daughter to school. I was thinking in the car, coming back. I put the words together, and I just did the melody while you were waiting in the kitchen." He's working with Mark Ronson today – one of several producers he's considering for the record – so he decided to write

something appropriate. "Mark DJ'd at our wedding reception, so I'm thinking 'party' – I came up with a song, 'The Life of a Party Girl.'"

If anything, songs come too easily to McCartney, which may explain how the Beatles-level songs in his solo catalog can coexist with throwaways like "Let 'Em In." "I have to be careful that something just doesn't come out too bland," he says. "Paul Simon works his music much more than I do, with a first draft, a second draft, third draft. I do that as well, but not as much as he does. It's different kinds of music. I'm not sure that Arthur 'Big Boy' Crudup thought too much about 'That's All Right, Mama.' [Allen] Ginsberg used to say, 'First thought, best thought,' and then he'd spend hours editing his work. I do sometimes write one and look at it and shudder and say, 'I don't like that.'"

At the deepest level, McCartney has little idea where all the melodies come from. He still hasn't figured out how he wrote "Yesterday" in his sleep. "I don't like to use the word 'magic,' unless you spell it with a 'k' on the end, because it sounds a bit corny. But when your biggest song – which 3,000 people and counting have recorded – was something that you dreamt, it's

very hard to resist the thought that there's something otherworldly there."

Does he feel like God sent him a giant check? "Or, I unwittingly sent it to myself," he says. "I have this sort of theory that all the time you're inputting your computer with information from the world, and one day it prints out for you. I think in the case of 'Yesterday,' it was an involuntary print-out. On the other hand, it might be God, I'm not ruling that out."

McCartney always seemed to be the least spiritually inclined Beatle (or the second-least – who knows what was going on with Ringo). There's no "My Sweet Lord" in his repertoire – not even an "Across the Universe." "I believe in a spirit, that's the best I can put it," he says. "I think there is something greater than us, and I love it, and I'm grateful to it, but just like everyone else on the planet, I can't pin it down. I'm happy not pinning it down. I pick bits out of all the religions – so I like many things that Buddhists say, I like a lot of things that Jesus said, that Mohammed said."

And in the end, McCartney is convinced it all boils down to a very brief message, which he reveals with great Liverpudlian gravity: "Be cool and you'll be all right," he says. "That's rock & roll religion."

UNDERCOVER ANARCHIST

[Cont. from 57] wanted to know if Kennedy, given his remorse, would be willing to assist them. It was a shot at redemption, and Kennedy leaped at it. Now that the operation had been exposed, he wasn't going to remain silent anymore. "I want to help," he told his friend.

Kennedy was amazed to learn that the defense attorney representing his former friends didn't know about the secret recordings he had made before the Ratcliffe protest. Prosecutors in the case had not entered the tapes as evidence. Kennedy immediately realized why: because the tapes proved that the activists he spied on had only engaged in a series of disjointed discussions that fell far short of the legal definition of conspiracy.

With Kennedy now on their side, the defense demanded that prosecutors disclose his role in the case. On January 7th, 2011, just three days before the Ratcliffe-on-Soar trial, the Crown Prosecution Service replied with a bombshell of its own: because of "previously unavailable material that significantly undermines the prosecution's case," the charges against the defendants were being dropped. The environmentalists were free.

The fallout was immediate and far-reaching. In a damning ruling against the state last summer, the court quashed 20 previous convictions against the Ratcliffe-on-Soar activists, citing "the failure of the Crown to make proper disclosure of material relating to the role and activities of the undercover police officer, Mark Kennedy, as well as of materials that had the potential to provide support for the defense case or to undermine the case for the prosecution." As a result, the court concluded, "Justice miscarried."

Acknowledging that "something had gone very wrong" in the spying against protest groups, the government stripped the private association that oversaw the operation of its role in targeting domestic extremism. "I absolutely do not believe there is justification for infiltrating environmental protesters unless there is evidence that they are an actual threat to national security, which means that they're going to use violence," declared Michael Meacher, a member of Parliament and former environment minister. "It's a waste of police time." Despite the millions of dollars spent on Operation Pegasus, the police had failed to convict even a single protester of a crime.

Today, a string of separate inquiries, including an independent investigation ordered by the director of public prosecutions, have been launched into the government's eco-spy operation. After four more undercover cops like Mark Kennedy were exposed by the investigations, eight female activists sued the Metropolitan Police for trauma, saying they had been

tricked into falling for cops who were "pretending that they were also political activists who shared their values, aims and broad political outlook." Three of the women claim they had sex with Kennedy, including Megan. "If that's what she wants to do, then fair enough," says Kennedy, who refuses to believe that his lies invalidated whatever they had together. "I don't regret it at all. We shared an amazing time, and we loved each other."

As revelations about Kennedy's secret missions to other countries – including Iceland, France, Italy and Denmark – continue to surface, the outrage has gone global. "The Kennedy case is bringing to light policies that have become widely institutionalized," says Will Potter, author of *Green Is the New Red: An Insider's Account of a Social Movement Under Siege*. "This has been business as usual for a number of years now."

In Germany, the federal police chief admitted to working with the British government to send Kennedy to spy on left-wing groups. The American government, however, remains less forthcoming. "I can't comment if we had involvement with Mark Kennedy and his travel," says Bertram Fairies, an assistant unit chief at the FBI.

But other revelations about the widespread spying on American protest groups are emerging. The Justice Department's inspector general has released a report showing that the FBI, with "little or no basis," wrongly spied on Greenpeace, PETA and anti-war protesters between 2001 and 2006. The inspector general condemned the operation as "unreasonable and inconsistent with FBI policy." Environmental groups were outraged. "There needs to be healthy skepticism from the public when they see police infiltrating citizen organizations," says Mark Floegel, an investigator for Greenpeace. "Every cop hanging out in an environmental meeting is a cop that is not going after real crime."

For Kennedy, the whistle-blowing has come with a heavy cost. First, he betrayed the trust of his fellow activists and was shunned by those he spent years coming to admire. Then, he spoke out against the police, the band of brothers that had been his family since birth. Today, he dwells in a no man's land – often staying with his brother in Cleveland, far from home, with no job and little money. He still watches his carbon footprint, but bits of his old self sometimes surface, unbidden, the former cop emerging from the hippie activist. At lunch one day, when the waiter comes over to take his order, Kennedy looks at him with his good eye and says, "I'll have the lamb."

Kennedy insists that his years of deceit are over. "I'm done telling lies," he says one night at a cafe. "It hurts and it destroys. It destroyed the life and the girl I loved so

much, and it's destroyed my life. I don't want to be doing lies again, because I've done that as a job, professionally, and it's devastating." He now has a new mission in mind: to share his experiences with activists and cops, to improve the effectiveness of both protests and policing in the age of the Occupy movement.

"I've experienced both sides of the overzealous policing," he says. "If the cops were better-educated as to why somebody goes along to a protest and does these things, then it could be policed in a far better and more understanding way." Deploying riot squads to protests, he says – despite intelligence that suggests there's no need – only increases the risk of violence. "This has the detrimental effect of retaliatory behavior by protesters, as seen at recent Occupy events," he says. "The actions of one person throwing a missile or one cop hitting a protester is magnified throughout both sides."

Kennedy believes the Occupy movement is being infiltrated "on a day-to-day basis" by people just like the cop he used to be. But he thinks the activists involved have more pressing matters to worry about than undercover cops. "Personally, I think the Occupy movement has lost its focus," he says. "Internal politics – like whether there should be a vegan kitchen or a smoking tent at a site – have diluted the actual reason why people went there in the first place. That's a common theme I've seen throughout years of protest and camps."

Such sentiments, however, do nothing to appease those he betrayed. For seven years, Kennedy spied on environmental activists around the world. He attended their protests and hung their banners and lived among them, only to turn them over to the authorities. His work wound up costing him his family, his job, his country. Yet even his decision to switch sides during the conspiracy case has failed to win back the friendship of those who introduced him to a world he had never known, one that values loyalty and courage every bit as much as the police force he once served. "He's having to come to terms with a whole lot of very, very contradictory things in his life," says Monroe, the friend he taught to climb. "But I don't think you can trust a word that he says."

ROLLING STONE (ISSN 0035-791X) is published biweekly except for the first issue in July and at year's end, when two issues are combined and published as double issues, by Wenner Media LLC, 1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10104-0298. The entire contents of ROLLING STONE are copyright © 2012 by ROLLING STONE LLC, and may not be reproduced in any manner, either in whole or in part, without written permission. All rights are reserved. Canadian Goods and Service Tax Registration No. R125041855. International Publications Mail Sales Product Agreement No. 450553. The subscription price is \$39.96 for one year. The Canadian subscription price is \$52.00 for one year, including GST, payable in advance. Canadian Postmaster: Send address changes and returns to P.O. Box 63, Malton CFC, Mississauga, Ontario L4T 3B5. The foreign subscription price is \$80.00 for one year, payable in advance. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Canada Post publication agreement #40683192. Postmaster: Send address changes to ROLLING STONE Customer Service, P.O. Box 6003, Harlan, IA 51593-1503.

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CHARTS

iTunes Top 10 Songs

- 1 Kelly Clarkson**
"Stronger (What Doesn't Kill You)" *19*
- 2 Adele**
"Set Fire to the Rain" *XL/Columbia*
- 3 David Guetta**
"Turn Me On"
What a Music/Astralwerks/Capitol
- 4 Tyga**
"Rack City"
Cash Money/Universal Motown



- 5 Wiz Khalifa and Snoop Dogg**
"Young, Wild & Free" *Atlantic*
- 6 Madonna**
"Give Me All Your Luvin'" *Interscope*
- 7 Flo Rida**
"Good Feeling" *Poe Boy/Atlantic*
- 8 Glee Cast**
"Smooth Criminal" *20th Century Fox/Columbia*
- 9 Gym Class Heroes**
"Ass Back Home" *Decaydance/Fueled by Ramen*
- 10 Jessie J**
"Domino" *Lava/Universal Republic*

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College Radio Top 10 Albums

- 1 The Black Keys**
El Camino Nonesuch
- 2 Cloud Nothings**
Attack on Memory Carpark
- 3 Nada Surf**
The Stars Are Indifferent to *Astronomy Barsuk*
- 4 First Aid Kit**
The Lion's Roar Wichita
- 5 Guided by Voices**
Let's Go Eat the Factory *GBV*
- 6 Of Montreal**
Paralytic Stalks *Polyvinyl*
- 7 Ani DiFranco**
"Which Side Are You On?" *Righteous Babe*
- 8 Porcelain Raft**
Strange Weekend Secretly Canadian
- 9 The Big Pink**
Future This 4AD



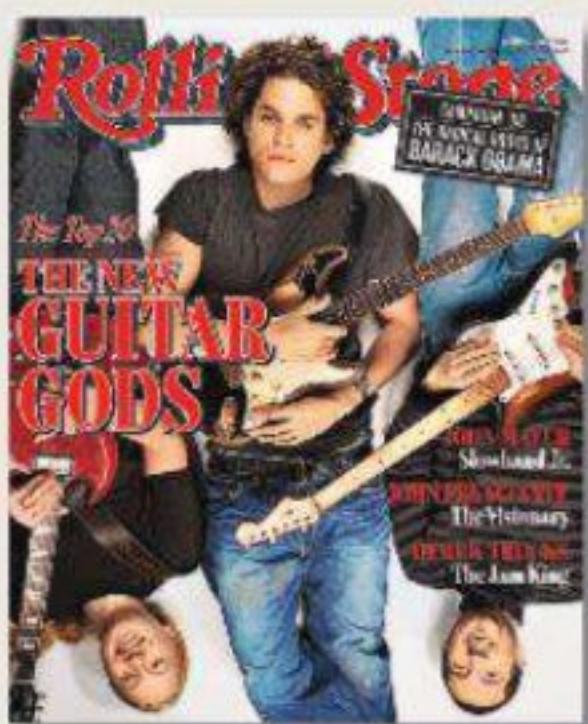
- 10 Cate Le Bon**
Cyrk The Control Group

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From the Vault RS 1020, February 22nd, 2007

TOP 10 SINGLES

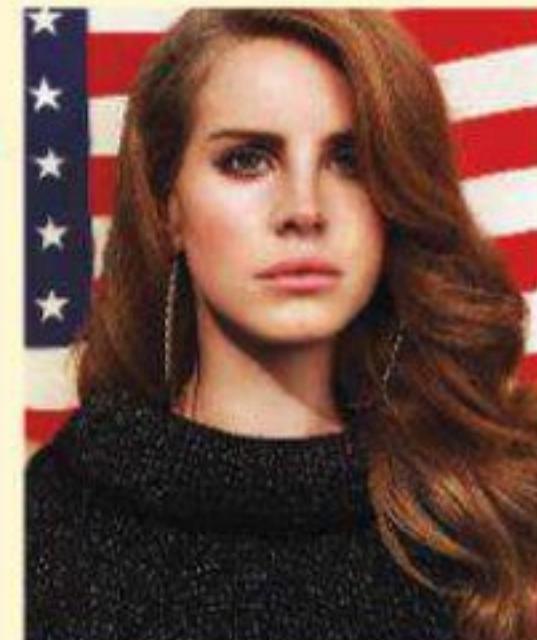
- 1 Nelly Furtado**
"Say It Right" *Geffen*
- 2 Beyoncé**
"Irreplaceable" *Columbia*
- 3 Gwen Stefani**
"The Sweet Escape" *Interscope*
- 4 Fall Out Boy**
"This Ain't a Scene, It's an Arms Race" *Island*
- 5 Ludacris**
"Runaway Love" *DTP/Def Jam*
- 6 Daughtry**
"It's Not Over" *RCA*
- 7 Gym Class Heroes**
"Cupid's Chokehold" *Decaydance/Fueled by Ramen*
- 8 Justin Timberlake**
"What Goes Around...Comes Around" *Jive*
- 9 Fergie**
"Glamorous" *Universal*
- 10 Akon**
"I Wanna Love You" *Konvict/Upfront/SRC/Universal*



On the Cover
"I'm going for the biggest, fluffiest sound. I want my guitar to sound like Sting's voice - think on the bottom. Eric Clapton is so influential that people go, 'Is that Clapton or someone doing Clapton?' I want to get to the point where someone says, 'I can tell that's John Mayer.'" —John Mayer

Top 40 Albums

- 1 Adele**
21 XL/Columbia
- 2 NEW Lana Del Rey**
Born to Die *Interscope*
- 3 NEW Leonard Cohen**
Old Ideas *Columbia*
- 4 2012 Grammy Nominees**
Various Artists *Grammy*
- 5 Kidz Bop Kids**
Kidz Bop 21 Razor & Tie
- 6 Drake**
Take Care *Young Money/Cash Money*
- 7 Tim McGraw**
Emotional Traffic *Curb*
- 8 NEW Fred Hammond**
God, Love & Romance *F Hammond/Verity*
- 9 LMFAO**
Sorry for Party Rocking *Party Rock/Will.i.am/Cherrytree/Interscope*
- 10 Rihanna**
Talk That Talk *SRP/Def Jam*
- 11 Mary J. Blige**
My Life II...The Journey Continues (Act 1) *Matriarch/Geffen*
- 12 Young Jeezy**
TM: 103: Hustlerz Ambition *CTE/Def Jam*
- 13 Kelly Clarkson**
Stronger *19*
- 14 The Black Keys**
El Camino Nonesuch
- 15 Luke Bryan**
Tailgates & Tanlines *Capitol Nashville*
- 16 Seal**
Soul 2 Reprise
- 17 Tony Bennett**
Duets II *RPM/Columbia*
- 18 Nickelback**
Here and Now *Roadrunner*
- 19 Adele**
19 XL/Columbia
- 20 GOTYE**
Making Mirrors *Samples 'N' Seconds/Fairfax*
- 21 NEW The Fresh Beat Band: Music From the Hit TV Show**
Soundtrack *Nickelodeon/Legacy*
- 22 Lady Antebellum**
Own the Night *Capitol Nashville*
- 23 Skrillex**
Bangarang (EP) *Big Beat/OWSLA/Atlantic*
- 24 Madonna**
Celebration *Warner Bros.*
- 25 Jason Aldean**
My Kinda Party *Broken Bow*
- 26 NOW 40**
Various Artists *Universal/EMI/Sony Music*
- 27 Lamb of God**
Resolution *Epic*
- 28 Coldplay**
Mylo Xyloto *Capitol*
- 29 Metallica**
Beyond Magnetic (EP) *Warner Bros.*
- 30 WOW Gospel 2012**
Various Artists *Word-Curb/EMI/CMG/Verity*
- 31 Lil Wayne**
Tha Carter IV *Young Money/Cash Money*
- 32 Etta James**
The Best of Etta James: 20th Century Masters, the Millennium Collection *MCA*
- 33 Jay-Z and Kanye West**
Watch the Throne *Rot-a-Fella/Roc Nation/Def Jam*
- 34 Toby Keith**
Clancy's Tavern Show Dog-Universal
- 35 Scotty McCreery**
Clear as Day *19/Mercury Nashville*
- 36 NEW Soja**
Strength to Survive *ATO*
- 37 The Band Perry**
The Band Perry *Republic Nashville*
- 38 Beyoncé**
4 Parkwood/Columbia
- 39 Kellie Pickler**
100 Proof *19/BNA*
- 40 Mumford & Sons**
Sigh No More *Glassnote*



Lana Del Yay!

LDR's SNL gig got panned by everyone from bloggers to Brian Williams, but the publicity didn't hurt: Her debut sold 77,000 copies in Week One.



Hallelujah

Cohen's first LP since his monster 2008 comeback tour moved 41,000 copies in its first week - nearly five times more than his 2004 disc.



YouTube Superstar

Belgian indie bro Gotye's quirky hit "Somebody That I Used to Know" - 65 million YouTube spins and climbing - helped drive his third LP up 25 spots.



Into the Groove

In the week surrounding her giant Super Bowl half-time show and world-tour announcement, Madonna sold 16,000 copies of her 2009 greatest-hits set.

00 Chart position on Feb. 8th, 2012

00 Chart position on Feb. 1st, 2012

NEW New Entry ↑ Greatest Gainer

2ND Re-Entry

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: NICOLE NODLAND; DOMINIQUE ISERMANN; WARWICK BACKER; MERT AND MARCUS; TOM BEARD; PAMELA LITTKY



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A close-up photograph of a man's face, looking intensely at the camera. A woman's hand is visible on the left, gently touching his cheek. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the contours of their faces.

THE NEW FRAGRANCE FOR HIM



A close-up photograph of a woman's face, looking slightly away from the camera. A man's hand is visible on the right, resting on the back of her neck. The lighting is soft, creating a intimate atmosphere.

THE NEW FRAGRANCE FOR HER

